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The Influence of Social Capital on Community Sustainability in Meacham Park, Missouri During 1996 -1999

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in Meacham Park, Missouri During 1996 - 1999

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Table of Contents

- Background
- The Urban Landscape
  - Black Community Sustainability Within the Social Construct
  - Educational Systems
  - Systems of Laws and Public Policy
  - Routines of Racism
  - Political Intervention: Urban Renewal, Renovation, and Revitalization
  - A Road to Black Community Sustainability
- Black Community Sustainability Through
  - Collective Action
  - Civic Engagement
  - Economic Security and Welfare
  - Confidence in Government
- Statement of Problem
- Statement of Purpose and Rationale
- Research Question
- Significance of the Study
- Definition of Terms

- Historical Perspective
  - How Politics and Policies Impact Black Lives and Community in St. Louis
  - Community Sustainability: What, When, How, and Why
- Key Issues
  - Sustaining Black Communities Within the Social Context
  - The Impact of Community Activism on Sustaining Black Communities
- Theoretical and Conceptual Framework
  - Putnam's Bowling Alone
  - Putnam's Social Capital Theory
  - Bridging and Bonding Social Capital
  - Social Capital Framework
  - Opposition to Putnam's Social Capital Theoretical Framework
  - Critical Race Theory (CRT) intersects with Putnam's Social Capital
  - Expanding Putnam's Theory
- Author's Perspective
  - On Common Ground
  - The Communities Where We Lived
  - The Challenges of Black Community Living

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of social capital on the phenomenon of

community sustainability in Meacham Park Missouri, a Black neighborhood located in south St.

Louis county. It is believed that social capital influences the collective action needed to create

structures which lead to economic growth essential to community sustainability (Farrell, 2007,

Ginwright, 2015; Putnam, 1993). The core idea of Robert Putnam's social capital theory is there

is value in social networks (Putnam, 2000, 1993).   Examined were experiences of current and

past residents of Meacham Park using social capital constructs to analyze the significance of

collective activism on community sustainability. Also, included was an examination of Putnam's

bridging and bonding social capital. This study used the qualitative research approach to examine

the influence of collective activism on policy decisions relating to the 1992 annexation of

Meacham Park. The data from interviews, videotapes/pictures and document analysis were

triangulated to validate conclusions (Berg, 2009). The examination used four major constructs

based on Putnam's Social Capital Instrument (SCI): (1) civic engagement; (2) interpersonal trust;

(3) economic security and welfare; and (4) confidence in government. The SCI is a

comprehensive tool that is used to measure social capital in small and medium-size communities

(van Kemenade, 2003). An examination of data revealed Kirkwood's strategic approach to

dismantle economic and social structures through public policies. These tactics significantly

impacted the ability of the Meacham Park residents to sustain a substantial portion of the

community (Putnam, 1993; Berg, 2009; Randall, 2016).

Keywords: Community Sustainability; Social Capital; Collective Activism

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background

The sustainability of Black communities is contingent upon public policies, political

structures, and routines of racism, but it is the intersectionality of race and class that results in the

structural nature of oppression (Adams et al., 2013). This structural violence within the Black

community is the result of large scale social and political forces that systematically break bonds

among individuals, families, and communities (Wilkinson & Kleinman, 2016). It is these

institutionalized barriers in St. Louis, Missouri that have hindered the development and

sustainability of Black communities and negatively impact the collective prosperity of its

residents. With this type of social suffering, "academic discourse fails to capture an adequate

sense of the anguish borne by people as they struggle to navigate a course through real-life

conditions of adversity" (Wilkinson & Kleinman, 2016, p. 92). Educating the community seems

to be the key to greater social involvement and the core idea of social capital – social contacts and

networks that affect productivity of individuals and groups. This network has the social potential

to substantially improve the living conditions in the whole community (Putnam, 2000, 1993).

Black communities are not always uniform in their response to oppression. The reaction

to oppression sometimes produces docility and at other times it is violently resisted (Marx, 1969).

Through marches, sit-ins, rallies, protest, and resistance, race-based inequalities have been

challenged and well documented in laws, acts and policies throughout the history of the United

States and Missouri. Blacks have fought for equity and access to the American Dream, provided

legislative action such as the GI Bill, New Deal legislation, job placement programs, lending

practices, unemployment benefits, and schooling which contained no racial distinctions, but the

assignment of powers to the states ensured discriminatory treatment for Blacks (Katznelson,

2005).

The dynamics of colonialism and discriminatory exclusion have been both political and

social in nature. For centuries, the elements of race and class have intertwined in ways that

hinder the ability of Black communities to thrive – socially, politically, and most important, economically. The social objectives have been containment, the maintenance of a cheap labor force, and all the social benefits that accrue to a society structured on privilege and stratification (Watkins, 1993). There are two kinds of containment: physical containment which includes the restriction of Blacks to certain neighborhoods and locations; and sociopolitical containment which involves short-circuiting radical activity that lead to systemic change (Watkins, 1993).

The Urban Landscape

Years of neglect and disinvestment in Black communities has led to mistrust – making transformative engagement that leads to equitable outcomes for Blacks living in marginalized communities seemingly impossible (Bergstrom et al., 2014). Individuals in these communities are brought under a painful compulsion to think beyond and act against what is happening to them; but what holds them in suffering is the terrifying absence of an adequate means of collective activism that has the power and structure to change their state of being (Wilkinson & Kleinman, 2016; Putnam, 2000). Whereas, Black communities such as Pruitt-Igoe, Kinloch, and Meacham Park protested the dissolution or revitalization of their communities, residents were unable to generate the social capital through collective action needed for community sustainability (Putnam, 2000; Wright, 2004). Consequently, all fell to the weight of political and economic pressure resulting in their demise or an unrecognizable state of being – shopping malls, boutiques, pubs, parking lots, bike trails, and condominiums.

"Structural violence is a term used to describe how structural oppression destroys and harms communities" (Ginwright, 2015, p. 3) in ways that are devastating to its social and economic structure. Examples of this structural violence include "macro-issues such as joblessness, poor housing, drug addiction, racism, abject poverty, and discrimination which adversely and disproportionately impact [Black] urban communities" (Morris, 2009, p. 154). The well-being of Blacks who live in low-economic communities, are affected by the stressors of mental and physical health brought on by generation after generation of abject poverty and

oppression (Ginwright, 2015). The lack of standard resources, elementary justice, and prolonged exposure to trauma all present tremendous challenges in creating community sustainability and prosperity through social change (Katznelson, 2005; Ginwright, 2015).

Access to fundamental components such as quality schools; affordable housing; and economic stability are the necessities that enable communities to grow and prosper. The absence of these components creates "socially toxic environments that erode trusting relationships and severely constrain collective action and agency" (Ginwright, 2015, p. 3). These socially toxic environments are characterized by lack of opportunities; blocked access; and constrained resources (Ginwright, 2015; Yosso, 2005). Thus, sufficient levels of social capital – civic engagement; interpersonal trust; economic security and welfare; and confidence in government – that is needed within Black communities to influence collective action – continues to be systematically contained. A sufficient level of collective activism is a precursor to the economic growth that is essential to attaining sustainability (Putnam, 2000; Ginwright, 2015) in Black communities that have been marginalized.

Another critical barrier in urban community development is the level of earning power. Reported by the 2015 United States Census Bureau's Income and Poverty data, approximately 21.7% of Blacks fall below the $24,300 poverty line, more than twice the 9.9% of whites. Also, 33% of Blacks earn less than $40,000 annually and earn an average annual income of $54,352 which is $31,233 less than whites who earn an average annual income of $85,585 (United States Census Bureau, 2015). Blacks continued to earn far less than whites and a larger percentage of Blacks fall below the poverty line. In communities where there is a proliferation of poverty, violent crimes and poor health, social capital is likely to be low (Bryson & Mowbray, 2005). These economic disparities hinder the upward mobility that is essential for Black community sustainability.

Black Community Sustainability Within the Social Construct

For the last 500 years, society has been told some very specific untruths about the hierarchy of race – such as intelligence, sexual behavior, infant care, work ethics and abilities; personal restraints; law-abidingness; aggressive behaviors; family cohesion, and brain size (Sussman, 2014). "While biologist, geneticists, anthropologists, and sociologists all agree that race is not a scientific reality" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 38), these arbitrary genetic variations are used as mechanisms in creating social structures based on Black inferiority. Any voice in opposition to systemic racism is often met with statistical reminders as to why equity and equality is unwarranted. Generalization made by various entities of power and voice spew inconclusive flawed quantitative data to describe the state of the Black community to justify the colonization of these spaces (Ginwright, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Descriptive data reports from: teachers that most of the students in urban schools are reading below grade level; school counselors that cite the average ACT composite score of Black students is only 15; law enforcement that suspect Black citizens have a propensity for drug use and criminal involvement; and the current president of the United States believes that the Black community has poor educational institutions and are very unsafe (Mullen & Kealy, 2013). Without valid qualitative support – the cause and effect of social ills – this fixed mindset among society's leaders manifest into political actions and public policies based on generalizations and misinformation.

In retrospect, structural violence befits my experience growing up in a Black community in north St. Louis city where covert barriers placed limitation on individual's space and mobility. An educational system that prepared graduates for trades and service as opposed to career opportunities; a justice system that sought to criminalize the existence of Black males in ways that deteriorated the Black family structure; and systemic racism that hindered the prosperity of Black individuals and families (Sussman, 2014). It is these barriers and challenges that are used to justify policies that initiated the need for the gentrified process of urban renewal. It is the

oppressive interaction of these components that are systematically detrimental to the economic

growth and sustainability (Putnam, 2000) of Black communities.

Black community sustainability is contingent upon the intersectionality of quality

educational systems; just laws and public policies; and social equity void of the routines of

racism. These economic and social disparities in the community landscape results in the

displacement of Black residents and significantly changed the characteristic and culture of the

community (Wright, 2004). Whether the catalyst is the result of a natural disaster such as

hurricane Katrina or the disinvestment in Black neighborhoods often caused by White Flight,

both situations rendered long standing historical Black spaces blighted and ripe for gentrification

(Lee et al., 2015).

Educational Systems

A major contributor continues to cause the destabilization of the Black community is the

dismantling of urban community educational systems (Morris & Morris, 2002). Policy makers

fail to recognize the social and emotional losses of desegregation on Black communities and have

not weighed these components as critical factors that affect academic achievement (Morris &

Morris, 2002). It seemed logical for many African Americans to believe that with legal

desegregation of schools their children would finally get an education that was equal to that of

whites in their community (Morris & Morris, 2002). Not realizing the impact, the lack of

community based educational institutions has on the economic growth and stability of their own

community – Black parents raced toward the promises of desegregation (LeChasseur, 2014;

Morris & Morris, 2002).

Blacks in these new integrated educational settings were met with condescending disdain

by the receiving white community. The effectiveness of Black educational systems was derailed

by arguments relating to Black intellectual inferiority. The belief that Blacks do not have the

intellectual capacity to learn at high levels is engrained in the minds and actions of policy makers

and many school leaders in Black communities. Mechanisms of educational racism such as

disproportionate placement of Black males in special education; the systematic elimination of

Black educators through a bias praxis system; and school disciplinary codes of conduct that

criminalize adolescent behavior of Black students (Morris & Morris, 2002; Green, 2015). These

are the critical issues that continue to thwart educational equity and equality for Black students –

the opportunity gaps that have led to decades of propaganda about the phenomenon known as the

achievement gap.

Thus, the most damaging educational policy was the system of school desegregation that

did not provide equity or equality for Black students. Black students must gain a sense of

purpose and positive belief about themselves and the communities in which they live. In Vaught

2011 (as cited in Parker, 2015) used a wide-range of intensive research to present how "white

supremacy" creates and maintains urban school systems that have intentional harmful impact on

African American students' achievement and outcomes.

Systems of Laws and Public Policy

From the legalized atrocities of slavery to the standardized oppression of Jim Crow, these

American institutions adversely altered the minds and souls of Black folks in ways that have yet

to be undone (Katznelson, 2005; Ginwright, 2015). While past legislative acts eliminated the

overt practices of slavery and Jim Crow, it also laid the foundation for the future and continued

covert racism enacted and exercised by public and private American citizens and institutions.

Since the Emancipation Proclamation did little to change the hearts and minds of the Nation –

education, housing, and employment restrictions continued to form social, cultural, and economic

barriers (Katznelson, 2005). These barriers are continuing to adversely affect the ability of many

Blacks to prosper and their communities to thrive.

A major problem is that authorities and policy makers regard poor Black communities as

having criminal elements and are undeserving of equity and justice. So, placing physical and

metaphorical barriers around these communities is acceptable – such as curfews; traffic

barricades; heavy police presence; minimal resources; and restricted mobility (Boyles, 2015).

This belief about Black communities has justied the killing of Black motorists and pedestrians; under-minded the potential of Black intellect; and severed the lifeline of Black community to gain and sustain financial and social equity.

Because of these crippling barriers, optimism and hope are diminished and the sense of agency– the individual and collective ability to act and change life's conditions (Ginwright, 2015) – has been lost within marginalized Black communities. The persistent omission of Black voices in civil discourse, America's prosperity promise has been cemented through macro-aggressions such as prejudice, oppression, and racism that thwarts economic growth and social equity. Disproportionate number of Black males in the criminal justice system; Blacks being stopped and frisked by law enforcement; Black students tracked and placed in special education; and teacher bias that result in their inability to accurately gauge Black intellect. These are systemic routines of racism that have led generations of Black communities into a state of poverty and despair (Ginwright, 2015; Sussman, 2014).

Routines of Racism

Throughout history, steeped in educational policy is the science of educational racism that provided the justification of slavery; formed the premise for school desegregation; and continues to promote the implementation of remedial learning programs in Black school settings (Sussman, 2014). In thriving communities, effective school systems are essential to economic growth and sustainability, the eradication of schools from Black neighborhoods, significantly impact community sustainability (Yosso, 2005).

The inferior negro had to be separated from the superior white race – a covert belief that overtly manifest as racial social policies. Centuries of these policies have had a detrimental impact on the achievement of Black students – who perform at a level that are not comparable to those groups not burdened by generations of oppression and racism (Sussman, 2014). School desegregation continues to have a devastating impact on Black community sustainability (Morris & Morris, 2002, Murphy, Bond, Warren & Mclin, 2008; Yosso, 2005). The educational system

in America continues to be a two-tiered system – educating to ensure the existence of a working

class and a ruling class. This two-tiered system requires the use of hegemony to be successful and

a constant dose of the mind-altering drug of inferiority (Horsford & Grosland, 2013; Yosso,

2005). The idea of inferiority has been fed to Blacks students through a bias normed testing

system and the resulting statistical data. It is this "sense of inferiority [that] affects the motivation

of a child to learn" (Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483, 1954).

      In my twenty years as an urban school educator, the most significant barrier in educating

Black students is their lack of self-efficacy. Society's impact on the minds and souls of many

Black students has rendered them unable to believe in their own intellectual ability. As written

by Judge Warren in the Brown v Board opinion, "To separate them from others of similar age and

qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the

community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (Brown v.

Board of Educ., 347 U.S. 483, 1954, p. 5, lines 25-27). But educators continue to sift, and sort

students based on preconceived notions about their intellectual ability (Horsford & Grosland,

2013). This is considered best practices in Black school settings resulting in the implementation

of the deficit model - low expectations and an opportunity gap that results in the all so familiar

achievement gap. Rendering graduates ill-prepared to compete for academic, social, and

economic prosperity.

      "Race is the most important embodiment of the ethical crosscurrents that swirl around the

rocks of social capital in America" (Putnam, 2000, p. 361). Routines of racism such as

desegregation, red-lining and gentrification have played a significant role in the dismantling of

Black communities. Since the sustainability of Black communities is contingent upon the

intersectionality of public policy and the routines of racism, the states where racial policies were

more prevalent, social capital in Black communities were the lowest (Putnam, 2000). Because of

public policy, many of the thriving Black neighborhoods and communities in St. Louis, Missouri

– that were formed ironically by discriminatory housing practices – have disappeared because

sustainability is contingent on race-based policies (Wright, 2004, Putnam, 200 & Horsford, 2014). Those elements of social capital that are essential to community sustainability – were not normalized in many Black communities and destroyed in others.

Political Intervention: Urban Renewal, Renovation, and Revitalization

The claim of urban renewal, renovation, revitalization often results in gentrification – the aggressive displacement of Black low-income residents from the community they have resided in all their lives and replacing them with an affluent wealthier population (Murphy et al., 2008). With the support of urban policy and capital investments, gentrification has become the catalyst by which urban renewal, in many cases, has resulted in the colonization of Black spaces (Murphy et al., 2008; Alexandria, 2015) the takeover of previously Black owned homes and businesses.

This practice is not a new phenomenon, in the 1880's the Cherokee Indians were forcibly removed from their homeland and marched onto reservations (Murphy et al., 2008). In more modern times, Harvey (2000) states "gentrification has sprung up across the country as a magical solution to a host of social and economic ills, a claim to re-imagine an urban landscape synonymous with social injustice, economic crisis, and discrimination, is argued as one of potential 'value added' through the reinvention of place" (as cited in Jones, 2015, p. 266). Without the fiscal capacity and political influence to grapple with joblessness, family fragmentation and failing schools, the sustainability of Black communities continues to be in jeopardy despite the claims of urban renewal and development (Wilson & Johnson, 2015; Wright, 2004). The lack of fiscal and social investments has taken its toll on many Black communities in St. Louis which have succumb to the misguided promises of urban renewal rendering them unsustainable or extinct.

A Road to Black Community Sustainability

Robert Putnam's Bowling Alone refers to social capital as the connection among individuals – a way our lives are made more productive through social relationships. The social connection among neighbors that include good will, fellowship, and sympathy is the means for

accumulating social capital.   It is the sufficient degree of social capital that potentially leads to

substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community (Putnam, 1993). Although,

the association between social capital and Black community sustainability is unique, the

flexibility of the Social Capital Instrument (SCI) will enable the examination of the social and

racial constructs using four major components: (1) civic engagement; (2) interpersonal trust; (3)

economic security and welfare; and (4) confidence in government (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert &

Van Bastelair, 2002).

Strong traditions of civic engagement – voter turnout, newspaper readership, membership

in choral societies and literary circles, Lions Clubs, and social clubs – are the hallmarks of a

successful region (Putnam, 1993). Robert Putnam's social capital thesis established a framework

for measuring the impact collective activism has on economic growth and prosperity and more

specifically economic stability within a community. "Putnam argues that inter-connected

communities have lower crime, better education results and better care of the vulnerable" (Farrell,

2007, p. 33). Although, research does not support the claim that social capital drives economic

growth and vitality, it does appear to be associated with a more egalitarian and stable form of

economic performance and communitarian development (Casey et al., 2005) which is the basis of

Putnam's social capital theory.

Black Community Sustainability through Collective Activism

Throughout history, change has been the result of Americans taking an active role in the

social and political life of their communities – in churches and union halls; bowling alleys and

clubrooms, and committee tables (Putnam, 2000; Boggs, 2001). Advocating for fair and

equitable housing opportunities for Blacks in St. Louis has historically been met with opposing

political policies that hindered the sustainability of Black communities (Wright, 2004). Around

1913, the Legal Segregation of Negroes Committee in St. Louis conducted a study and found

Black communities had extended their boundaries through natural growth. To impede this

growth, through collective political activism, a segregation ordinance was placed on the ballot

and passed despite opposition from both whites and Blacks (Wright, 2004). Political activism also

prompted the United States Supreme Court ruling in the 1948 case of Shelley v Kraemer that

stated segregated housing is unconstitutional; and in 1968 Jones v Alfred H. Mayer Co. that all

citizens had the right to live in every state and territory (Wright, 2004).

During the early 1980's, the revitalization of the Tower Grove community in south St.

Louis city caused the displacement of hundreds of Black homeowners using gentrified tactics that

forced families from their homes and business. In the mid-1980s, as a witness to the events of a

Black homeowner in south St. Louis's Tower Grove area experienced the city takeover of their

three-story home. It began with the city citing regulatory repair of the property but denied the

repeated request for home improvement loans and community grant assistance - a tactic known as

redlining. The family was forced out of their home where they lived for more than 40 years and

raised 14 children.

The disorientation and alienation brought on by this type of displacement often lead to

adverse psychological, physical, economical, and social affects (Murphy et al., 2008). The

husband passed away after two years of being displaced and the wife passed away a few years

later – their children stated that neither ever recovered from the ordeal of being forced out of their

home and community they had lived in for decades. This was the testimony of one family on Park

Avenue located in near-South St. Louis city, many Black families in the community suffered a

similar fate. It was this untethered malevolence side of collective activism that resulted in this

social injustice. The revitalization of this previously urban space was forever changed, gone were

the poor and disenfranchise, but nevertheless homeowners and community members, replaced by

YUPs – young upcoming professionals - the preferred residence of Tower Grove's urban renewal.

Unlike eminent domain, the right of the government to purchase private property from

owners at fair market rate for public use, gentrification is a process of uprooting the urban poor

by raising rents and taxes making it impossible for them to stay in their community (Murphy et

al., 2008). No matter what side of the cause or argument, this form of collective activism has led

to the petition that placed ordinances, laws, and rulings on the ballot and before the Supreme

Court – resulting in significant impact on individuals, communities, regions, states, and the

country.

Civic Engagement

      Between 1900 and 1950, segregation in St. Louis north-south border created a condition

for the demise of the legal form of apartheid in America. Blacks in St. Louis drew upon their

internal community resources to build the requisite political power and civic culture to defeat the

Jim Crow in its legal form (Heathcott, 2005). During the 1960s, the height of the Civil Rights

movement, social activism was at its peak. This urban political and social climate enabled the

development of vital Black civic institutions, political associations, and organizations that

protested, challenged, and eventually dismantled the legal system of Jim Crow (Heathcott, 2005).

      After years of community protest, by Pruitt-Igoe who fought for fair housing; Kinloch

who fought against displacement; and Meacham Park who fought against colonization, these

Black communities were unable to formulate the kind of activism needed that would lead to

community sustainability. The fate of the urban landscape is at the mercy of redevelopment,

revitalization, and renewal – the euphemisms that leave Black communities unrecognizable and

its residents the victims of dissolution and displacement (Wright, 2004; Morris & Morris, 2002).

      Residents in Black communities must continue to educate and advocate in ways that hold

those that influence public policy – school boards, police chiefs, and business leaders –

accountable when implementing policies that negatively impact their lives (Horsford, 2014).

Urban activists must voice their opposition to racist policies that have led to hopelessness and

disabling despair among the people within Black communities to ensure sustainability. Despite

rhetoric that anyone can get ahead if they work hard, the economic status of the parent continues

to be the best indicator of his child's economic status (Johnson, 2013) if the cycle of economic

and psychological poverty is not broken. "This situation worsens as economic inequality grows

and the possibilities for social mobility steadily decline" (Johnson, 2013, p. 22). In a community

where opportunity, access, resources, and pathways to a better life are not clearly abundant and, in some cases, nonexistent; a culture in which structural violence continuously erodes the fabric that holds a community together – change has been the result of collective activism (Putnam, 2000; Yosso, 2015).

Community action is short lived inspiring and motivating movement and one that is rarely permitted to venture outside of a designated community or region of origin. Whereas, community activism encompasses the involvement of the larger community consisting of those directly involved and those who are activated by a common issue (Putnam, 1993; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). Maybe, this is this varying degree – action and activism – that generated the level of social capital capable of influencing political and social change within the Black community. While Putnam's social capital theory does not differentiate between bonding and bridging social capital, the findings of this study could illuminate this aspect of social capital theory (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002).

Interpersonal Trust

Infusion of resources into Black communities assume that people of color lack the social and cultural capital required for social and economic mobility (Yosso, 2015). The restoration of hope and trust are the most significant factors that will evoke community change. Because the capacity for Black sustainable community is the result of political interaction with public policy (Ginwright, 2015) within a structure of interpersonal trust among residents. The sustainability of a community requires the existence of trust that promotes social and cultural capital that leads to collective action (Putnam, 2000; Ginwright, 2015; LeChasseur, 2014).

Economic Security and Welfare

These decisions are often derived and perpetuated by quantitative statistical data such as crime rates, poverty levels, unemployment rates and educational achievement gaps (Horsford, 2014). Analysis of these statistics fail to validate conclusions resulting from social injustice and disenfranchisement (Sussman, 2014). However, these data continued to be used to form policy

that rarely address root causes that hinder the sustainability of Black communities. These misguided policies and politics result in drug abuse centers to address human despair; welfare as a means to address poverty; parole offices to monitor a lack of access to other opportunities; check cashing stores that hinders the ability to participate in valid economic markets; liquor licenses that provide tolerance for inadequate existence and disenfranchisement; church expansions to reason why prosperity has not yet come, putting into doubt ones hope and faith; and housing practices that provide minimum or no opportunity to grow wealth through home ownership (Horsford, 2014; Sussman, 2015; Mullen & Kealy, 2013; Moyo, 2009; Katznelson, 2005).

According to Moyo (2009), between 1970 and 1998, when aid flow to Africa were at their peak, poverty in Africa rose from 11% to a staggering 66% (Moyo, 2009). The implementation of the deficit model impact America's urban community in similar ways – poverty issues is an undeniable crippling condition in urban communities, but the focus is not on eliminating wealth inequalities. The poverty gap is most evident in communities segregated by race and class (Mullen & Kealy, 2013) and the strategies for closing the poverty gap – are often focused on remedies to address symptoms not a cure to address the critical origin of the disease. The social discourse must highlight the social injustice of gentrification and urban colonialization that systematically result in uneven development and displacements of traditionally Black communities in St. Louis, Missouri (Lee et al., 2015; Wright, 2004).

Also, society is unable or unwilling to recognize that Black poverty has a different origin and reality than white poverty. The white poor did not have the heritage of centuries to overcome cultural traditions which had been twisted and battered by endless years of hatred and hopelessness (Katznelson, 2005). Nor do the white poor experience the intentional and systematic breakdown of the family structure caused by the oppression and persecution of Black male masculinity. Social structures that limit the ability to fully participate in economic prosperity has been the most damaging to the Black community.

<u>Confidence in Government</u>

A major misconception is that urban community development is an increased quantitative outcome (Green, 2015); meaning, community sustainability is a continuation of increase in job training programs, low income housing and social service outreach programs. In Black communities, the prevalence of misguided increased resources intended to address the system of social and economic poverty do not sustain people or the communities in which they live. Local organizations are often focused on securing jobs and necessities, consequently, larger community issues and economic development are ignored (Pyles & Cross, 2008). These resources do not meet the long-term needs of individual or the community in which they live. These resources often perpetuate a system of social dependency and generational poverty - they do not address cause or effect of the longstanding conditions within these communities – which is severely linked to hopelessness (Ginwright, 2015; Moyo, 2009). Black poverty is not caused by despair, despair is the effect of poverty; therefore, social services cannot change the condition unless there is hope for economic opportunities.

Another aspect of the sustainability of Black communities is the thin line between community safety and individual rights. Policing Black spaces has been a set of intrusive policies such as Stop and Frisk and Stand Your Ground legislation that have criminalized the behaviors of black males across the country (Ginwright, 2015; Adams et al., 2013; Boyles, 2015). The result is American policies that continues to erect systemic barriers that prevent economic and emotional prosperity for Black Americans. To acknowledge that racism, discrimination, and prejudice continue to adversely affect the contemporary experiences of Blacks (Morris, 2009) would be a start in healing Black Americans and sustaining Black communities.

The ability to sustain Black communities in a way to ensure prosperity for its people is systemically contingent upon public policy and significantly linked to the whim of policy makers and their beliefs. Not listening to the lived experiences and histories of those oppressed by institutionalized racism restricts the ability to effectively analyze racial injustices (Yosso, 2015).

Consequently, federal, state, local politics and policies are often based on interest convergence –

doing what is in the best interest of those in power regardless of the negative impact on those in

need (Taylor, 1998). Therefore, these solutions have limited ability to advance the sustainability

of Black communities in a manner that leads to social capital and economic growth.

Statement of Problem

The problem is the inability of Meacham Park, a Black community located in south St.

Louis county, to acquire the sufficient level of social capital needed to foster collective activism

that will influence public policy agendas in ways that will ensure community sustainability.

Since the sustainability of Black communities is directly linked to race-based policy decisions

that are guided by the political and personal beliefs about the inhabitants (Hjollund & Svendsen,

2000) self-determination through collective activism is needed. To date, the theoretical and

conceptual framing of gentrification has been through the lens of Anglo-Americans and the

exploits of this social injustice are not part of the political discourse (Lee et al., 2015). If the

remaining residents of Meacham Park are unable to obtain a sufficient level of social capital, they

too may be dissolved.

Statement of Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of the research is to explore the influence community activism has on public

policy that would support the sustainability of the remaining community of Meacham Park

through economic growth. This examination will be conducted amid the dichotomy of Black

community sustainability and colonization that occurred in the community of Meacham Park.

Researchers, practitioners, and students are still searching for the necessary tools to effectively

analyze and challenge the impact of race and racism in US society (Yosso, 2005) and its impact

on prosperity. Extensive qualitative research is needed that examines causal domains – research

has shown the adoption of deficit model ideology has significant negative impact on the

sustainability of Black prosperity and their communities (Moyo, 2009; Sussman, 2014).

Research Questions

Community development leadership is rooted in a theory of equitable community change that aims to transform communities and support the people in the place (Green, 2015). The core idea of Putnam's social capital theory is that there is value in social networks. Putnam's belief is that the ability to sustain an urban community in ways that ensure economic prosperity for its people is through the existence of social capital that is significantly linked to community activism (Putnam, 2000, 1993). By exploring the experiences of current and past residents of Meacham Park, using Putnam's social capital theory, an analysis of the meaning and significance of collective activism on the sustainability of the community can be determined. This idea has led to finding answers to the following questions:

Primary

1. What influences did social capital have on the policy decisions that affected the sustainability of the Meacham Park community between 1990 and 1999?

Secondary

2. What kinds of civic engagement seem most likely to foster economic growth or community effectiveness (Putnam, 1993) in Black marginalized communities?

3. What argument can be made to substantiate the claim of an association between social capital and the sustainability of marginalized Black communities?

A sufficient level of social capital must exist in the Black community of Meacham Park, to promote community sustainability (Putnam, 1993). The sustainability of the Meacham Park community is contingent upon how collective activism domains interact with public policy in this south St. Louis county region. The study will also examine the influence collective activism – a key construct of Putman's social capital theory – had on community sustainability in Meacham Park.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to provide empirical qualitative data that can be used to change the social and economic trajectory of citizens in Black communities through sustainability. This study will explore the behaviors, beliefs, and actions of the residents of Meacham Park to identify instances of social capital which includes the impact of collective activism on public policies as it relates to community sustainability (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). According to CRT (Yosso, 2005), the research lens should be shifted away from the utilization of deficit analytical lens in which white middle-class communities are the standard-bearer. Access and opportunity are the overarching themes essential to the ability of Black community resources (churches, community centers, schools, civic organizations, businesses, and housing) to translate into meaningful avenues on the road to the prosperity for its existing population (Putnam, 2000, Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002; Wright, 2004).

Definition of Terms

The terms used in this paper where derived from the need to explain Putnam's social capital frameworks that will be considered when analyzing data and drawing conclusions based on these data.

- Blight – a community characterized by vacancies, dilapidated infrastructure and deep-seated poverty exacerbated by political and social disenfranchisement (Randall, 2018; Boyles, 2015).

- Bonding Networks – strong connections among individuals and groups with similar backgrounds (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Chazdon, Allen, Horntvedt & Scheffert, 2013).

- Bridging Networks – weak social ties that can help people get ahead and gain opportunities (Putnam, 2000; Chazdon et al, 2013)

- Collective Activism – social networks and contact that are formed in a way that affect the productivity of individuals and groups (Putnam, 1993, 2000).

- Critical Race Theory – a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact [educational] structures, practices, and discourses (Yosso, 2005).

- Deficit/Aids Model – an education reform model that is based solely on perceived and/or biased evidenced deficiencies of the student population within an educational system. (Morris, V. et al., 2002; Moyo, 2009).

- Gentrification – the aggressive displacement of Black low-income residents from the community they have resided in all their lives and replacing them with an affluent wealthier population (Murphy et al., 2008).

- Interest Convergence Theory – people in power will support social justice only to the intent when it benefits their own self-interests. (Taylor, 1998).

- Intersectionality – the experience of living as a member of multiple oppressive social groups (Adam et al., 2013).

- Linking Network – "networks and institutionalized relationships among unequal agents" (Chazdon et al., 2013, p. 2)

- Social Capital – The degree of the strength or weakness of internal and external relationships that enable the collective action of a group and/or individuals within a community that is needed for positive sustainable change (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Butler & Robson, 2001; Bryson & Mowbray, 2005 et al., 2005).

- Structural Violence – describes how systemic oppressions destroys and harms communities (Boyles, 2015).

- Sustainable Community – is one that can maintain sufficient and connective resources to ensure the viability and economic growth of its people – especially in multi-generational situations (Morris, 2009; Morris & Morris, 2002).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of the literature review was to critically examine the association between Putnam's social capital theory and the collective activism of residents living in Meacham Park, a Black south county community in St. Louis, Missouri. This review examined the plausibility of the framework to measure community sustainability within the context of Black resistance to oppressive social structures that existed in Meacham Park during a period of significant community change – between 1990 and 1999. Previous studies relating to social capital examined community sustainability in Brazil, Italy, Asia, Europe, and rural cities in the US, but the examination of Black communities lacked the critical examination of racial social structures have been limited (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). Racial identity and personal narrative are considered a critical component in the examination of issues that involve people of color (Lopez & Parker, 2003; Parker, 2015). Measuring social capital must recognize and be sensitive to cultural variations and must involve an examination of local structures (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002).   Thus, the conclusions drawn from previous studies are not completely reliable in finding solutions to issues relating to Black community sustainability in Meacham Park. Since there is limited research that focus on the influence social capital has on Black community sustainability in general and Meacham Park specifically, an examination of this phenomenon is needed.

It was also important to review literature relating to the opposition to Putnam's theory by Boggs (2001), Bryson & Mawbray (2005), and Farrell (2007) which provided clarification to dismissive interpretations of the theory. The opposition to Putnam's social capital theory cites social and political forces outside the control of community activist which limits their ability to influence change in significant ways (Boggs, 2001; Farrell, 2007). The primary focus of the literature review was to specifically examine the oppositional behavior employed, through collective activism, by community leaders, groups, and individuals in their attempt to thwart the

demolition of places and displacement from spaces occupied by Blacks in the Meacham Park

between 1990 - 1999.

Historical Perspective

Heathcott (2005) describes the historical account of the Jim Crow system of segregation

that occurred during the first half of the twentieth century when the Black population in St. Louis

rose by 60% to 70,000 between 1910 and 1920. This migration ignited the white constructed

political, real estate groups, neighborhood organization and merchant's vicious enforcement of

Jim Crow laws. Jim Crow lawfully prohibited Black Americans from taking advantage of policies

that helped whites build better lives and communities (Katznelson, 2005) described a history of

exclusion of Blacks from the benefits of government sponsored programs such as the New Deal,

The Fair Labor Act, and the GI Bill. Blacks did not benefit from these policies because they were

filtered through the racist politics and beliefs of the time. "At the very moments when a wide

array of public policies was providing most white Americans with valuable tools to advance their

social welfare, most Black Americans were left behind or left out" (Katznelson, 2005, p. 23).

The sustainability of white communities was preserved because of government structures,

however Black communities could not survive the political assault void of social justice and

equity.

The literature also examines the impact of Brown v Board of Education on Black

communities in St. Louis, Missouri. This landmark decision is part of the examination of studies

conducted by Morris & Morris, Yosso, and Katznelson. Morris (2009) examines the adverse

impact of the St. Louis City School Desegregation Program had on the quality of schools for

Black low income and working-class families and communities. Morris' research included an

examination of the impact of Brown v Board of Education which resulted in the dismissal of

Black educators and the decline of urban communities. The implementation of Brown is referred

by Yosso (2005) and Morris (2009) as an example of interest convergence, because it was not

until white school districts found an economic interest did the politics allow for busing Black

students from their communities into the suburbs. Morris & Morris (2002) speaks of the unmet

promises of desegregation in a historical account that focused on the learned. The small southern

urban community depicted in this book provides a description of what it meant to care for,

nurture, educate, and protect their children from what is described as the ravages of racial

segregation (Morris & Morris, 2002). Morris describes the assumptions about Black students

made by white teachers was a major factor in the decline in students' self-efficacy and

community destabilization. By developing racial literacy and reframing race in ways that

challenge individual assumption and biases (Horsford, 2014) political interaction with public

policy would yield a more equitable social and economic system.

How Politics and Policies Impacted Black Lives and Communities in St. Louis

A review of the literature reveals the system of institutionalized racism during the post-

US slavery era – early 1900s to modern times. The failure of the constitution to protect the

educational, social, political, and economic rights of Black Americans was examined through

research conducted in both southern and northern communities. But, regardless of the geographic

region, varying degrees of racism hindered the ability of Blacks to thrive economically and

socially (Katznelson, 2005).

As cited in newspaper reports, case studies and journals, the cause of the phenomenon of

destabilization of Black communities in St. Louis, Missouri have similar factors. The sort of

problems that motivated authorities to demolish the 33 high-rise towers in Pruitt-Igoe in 1972 –

poor construction, rampant crime, and social disorder (Husock, 1997) – also plagued the Kinloch

and Meacham Park housing complexes in ways that hindered the residents' ability to mobilize to

ensure community sustainability through economic growth.

Community Sustainability: What, When, How, and Why

A critical examination of what, when, how, and why, provided evidence to support the

belief that the troubling predicaments of Blacks living in Meacham Park were not simply of their

own volition, but significantly influenced by unchecked inequitable policies, norms, and

traditions (Miller et al., 2011) of the region's social structures. A system of oppressive federal,

state, and local politics continued to place barriers in the path of Black Americans striving to

progress toward social and economic prosperity. An understanding of institutionalized

exclusionary practices and policies aimed at Blacks in America such as union denials, financial

redlining, voter restrictions, and school desegregation adversely affect the prosperity of Blacks

(Katznelson, 2005) and Black community sustainability through economic growth. What specific

challenges did the residents in the Meacham Park community encounter? When did these

challenges manifest? How did Meacham Park residents respond to challenges confronting their

community? Why are Black communities in St. Louis, Missouri disappearing?   These questions

can be answered by examining the reaction of people, police, and politicians, to Black opposition

to oppression, inequality, and marginalization, who sought to hinder progress toward social and

economic equity. Residents in these communities describe a persistent feeling of geographic,

economic, and social isolation (Birmingham, 1999; Shinkle, 2002). These conditions are the

breeding ground for the injustices of gentrification, that disproportionately renders Black

communities unaffordable for moderate and low-income groups. In response to these social

conditions, political conflicts between classes, actors, value systems and other community forces

ensues (Murphy et al., 2008). Without the social structures, traditional community institutions

are devalued, and the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual well-being of individuals and

groups are placed at risk (Murphy et al., 2008)

Key Issues

        The literature review also examined the resistance of the Meacham Park community in

two distinct forms of oppositional behaviors – reactionary and progressive – that either reinforces

or challenges social domination (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). The form of oppositional behavior

employed determines the impact collective activism has on public policies (Putnam, 2000) that

impact the lives of Black folks living in marginalized communities challenged by oppression,

racism, and bigotry. The gentrification was a ubiquitous element in the dissolution of the

Meacham Park community and/or the displacement of its residents.

Sustaining Black Communities Within the Social Context

        Both metaphorically and literally, St. Louis was a gateway city joining a southern

historical heritage to midwestern social patterns (Lang, 2008). The civil rights activism in St.

Louis responded to those who attempted to politically marginalize Black working-class

communities through restructuring municipal government. By 1910, racial restrictive policies

widened in response to the growing number of Blacks migrating to the St. Louis region – nearly

70,000 of 773,000 St. Louisans were Black by 1920 (Lang, 2008). Schools, theaters, restaurants,

and parks enforced the Jim Crow laws that governed southern society. This mobilization of Black

prompted the collective activism to relevant issues relating to stratifying urban economic policies;

inequitable structures of municipal governance and barriers to fair job opportunities, housing and

full exercise of the vote (Lang, 2008). Black working-class activists challenged the powerful

elites by garnering support from white and Black civic leaders and the media to include two

Black weekly newspapers.

The Impact of Community Activism on Meacham Park

        Blacks exercising their rights and freedom have historically been met with aggressive

deterrents by citizens, police, and politicians opposing their view of equality and civil rights.

Throughout the slave era, those Blacks who spoke out against slavery were punished with the

tortures of whips, chains, and hangings (Heathcott, 2005). Blacks demanding the right to vote

were met with the disenfranchisement through a system of Jim Crow laws. During the civil rights

era, Black protestors were met with the brutality of fire hoses, dogs, police, and local politicians.

In the 21st century in opposition to police brutality, Blacks are still met with dogs, pepper spray,

army tanks, and military assault weapons when seeking equality through non-violent protest

(Marx, 1969). Exercising the First Amendment right that protect freedom of speech and

peaceable protest - taking a knee in the presence of the flag during the adopted anthem as a

citizen of the United States has resulted in the loss of livelihood for Colin Kaepernick former

quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

"Social Capital is not a new idea" (Farrell, 2007, p. 72). The interaction within

institutions and networks that are supported by norms and values are recognized by

anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and economists the critical role of social capital

in the development of interventions (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). "The theory has been

invoked to provide explanations for such wide-ranging topics as education, healthcare, juvenile

delinquency, crime rates, economic development, and business organizations" (Casey & Christ,

2005, p. 827). The application of social capital in this study used the core domains of trust and

engagement to examine community sustainability.

The theoretical formation of social capital has also been independently invented many

times during the twentieth century by Bourdieu (1986); Coleman (1988); Putnam (1993) and

Tzanakis (2013). However, at the core of this theory – that is common among all – is the

fundamental premise that our lives are made more productive by social connections and ties

(Tzanakis, 2013; Putnam, 2000). Since extensive research by World Bank (2013) has provided

empirical data that validates research methodologies, Putnam's theoretical framework was used to

examine the impact social capital had on the sustainability of the Meacham Park community

(Chazdon et al., 2013).

<u>Putnam's Bowling Alone</u>

Based on his 1995 thesis of a multi-year study involving 500,000 participants, Robert

Putnam's Bowling Alone was published in 2000 (Putnam, 2000). The title refers to the dramatic

decline in bowling leagues across the country – which is a metaphor for the lack of social and

political connectivity (Putnam, 2000; Farrell, 2007). In Bowling Alone, Putnam puts forth an

argument based on his examination of American social interaction and community activism over

twenty-five years – since 1950 (Putnam, 2000; Casey & Christ, 2005). In Bowling Alone,

Putnam presented a 14-variable state-level social capital index which argues that social capital is a collective asset that is shared and produced by members of a group (Chazdon et al., 2013; Putnam, 2000).

As Putnam defined in Bowling Alone, the fundamental principal of the social capital theory is that social and fellowship among individuals and families generate the social potential sufficient to substantially improve the living condition of the whole community (Putnam, 2000). Research by Warren & Mapp (2011) "found that organizing efforts that focused on building community capacity successfully addressed poverty and racism by increasing power among marginalized community through strategy sessions around policy issues, cross-sector partnership between families, faith-based communities, and school" (Horsford & Sampson, 2014, p. 963). Putnam's social capital theory seeks to build the community capacity through collective activism that is the intersection of human capital and organization resources. Putnam's social capital theory is supported by Chaskin's empirical research in Detroit, Hartford, Memphis, and Milwaukee which cites the intersectionality of social capital as a key component that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve the well-being of the community through organized efforts (Horsford et al., 2014).

Putnam's Social Capital Theory

In *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam's social capital theory espouses the idea that collective activism is essential to systemic social change that leads to economic growth and sustainability (Putnam, 2000, 1993). "Social capital is coming to be seen as a vital ingredient in economic development around the world" (Putnam, 1993, p. 5). Putnam (1993) posed a key question, "How does social capital undergird good government and economic progress?" He believes civic engagement: (1) foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity; (2) facilitates coordination and communication and amplifies trustworthiness; and (3) provides a cultural template that establishes future collaboration (Putnam, 1993, 2000). "Social capital is regarded as a public

good, meaning it is a by-product of other social activities that are transferable from one social

setting to another" (Putnam, 1993).

<u>Bonding and Bridging Social Capital</u>

As described by Putnam in Bowling Alone (2000) it is important to distinguish between

bridging and bonding social capital – bonding social capital is an exclusive network and bridging

is an inclusive network (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital is for reciprocity and mobilizing

solidarity within an exclusive network; and bridging social capital establishes links to inclusive

external assets, information and opportunity (Putnam, 2000).   The bonding social capital

consisting of exclusive homogeneous social networks bonded within a social category – church

groups, ethnic fraternal groups – that help people get by; and bridging social capital consist of

inclusive social networks that link different races, ages, and classes that help people get ahead

(Putnam, 2000; Farrell, 2007).

Figure 1 below, describes the association between social action and bridging/bonding

social capital as a measure of weak (-) and strong (+) impact. For example, when social change is

determined by wealthy external forces and the poor have few options, weak bridging and bonding

social capital occurs. "Communities with weak bonding and bridging social capital suffer from

extreme individualism and find it difficult to engage in any sort of collective action" (Chazdon et

al., 2013, p. 2).

Table 1: Community Social Capital Typology and Change

Bridging Social Capital			
		-	+
Bonding Social Capital	**-**	Wealthy solve problems with financial capital; the poor have few options	Community change dominated by local or external local bosses or power elites
	+	Community resists externally initiated change or infighting negates community change efforts	Locally initiated change driven by community defined goals, with links to external resources

Adopted from Flora, C. B., Flora, J. L. & Fey, S. (2004). Rural communities: Legacy and change (2nd ed.). Thousand
Oaks, CA: Sage Publications (Chazdon et al, 2013).

Social Capital Framework

Robert Putnam's social capital theory focus on the benefits of accruing civic engagement and community activism among individuals and these ties to others influence economic growth. "Putnam suggests the higher levels of social capital in the 1950s and 1960s were associated with lower crime rates, higher levels of economic prosperity and better health and happiness" (Farrell, 2007, p. 29). The primary theoretical perspective uses Putnam's social capital theory to examine the belief that norms and networks of civic engagement is a precondition for economic growth and development (Putnam, 1993, 2000). The key components of Putnam's social capital framework that were examined are – civic engagement, interpersonal trust, economic security and welfare, and confidence in government. Because, Putnam believes these components influence the collective action needed to create the economic growth and investment that is essential to sustainability of marginalized communities (Putnam, 1993, 2000). As Robert Putnam argues, communities that are inter-connected are healthier communities (Farrell, 2007).

Secondary theories, include four supportive theoretical perspectives: (1) Yosso (2005) conceptions of Bell's Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the needs to acquiring cultural wealth; (2) Morris (2002) Communal Bonding beliefs that quality urban schools are extricable linked to housing, politics, and economics; (3) Lynn & Dixson (2013) defines Bell's Interest Convergence Theory as the phenomenon in public policy decisions where the interest of whites hinders the advancement of the intended beneficiary; and (4) Ladson-Billings (1995) explained that culturally relevant pedagogy is a "pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment" (as cited in Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 165).

This examination was viewed through a broad lens of race-based issues that impact public policy. An essential aspect was Derrick Bell's perspectives relative to CRT and the accompanying theoretical propositions of Interest Convergence. The tenet of CRT is that racism is the normal way society conducts business, structure institutions, and the daily experience of

Blacks living in America – it is the way American society continues to thrive (Ladson-Billings,

2013). Interest Convergence is the connective principle that states, "white people will seek racial

justice only to the extent that there is something in it for them" (Ladson-Billing, 2013, p. 38) and

in most cases cause harm and despair to marginalized groups (Ladson-Billing, 2013). Although,

articles written by Sweets (1971); Bower (1991); Thom (1994); Shinkle (2002), and Sutin (2000)

in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, might have led one to believe differently, Kirkwood's actions

leading up to the annexations of Meacham Park had nothing to do with altruism.

The sustainability of Meacham Park specifically, and Black communities in general was

the focus of the examination. Unlike previous studies, the essential constructs of Putnam's social

capital theory were examined through these secondary prisms – that acknowledges the impact of

race on public policy (see Appendix C) that structures the social reality of Black communities.

The context of social capital framework as it relates to Black communities is within the social

structures of Jim Crow Laws, the Civil Rights Movement, and Brown v Board of Education at the

federal level (Katznelson, 2005). Even more significant, the oppressive structures of policies at

the local level such as the Legal Segregation of Negroes in St. Louis, 1916 Segregation

Ordinance, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act (Wright, 2004). In all instances, collective activism

was the catalyst that enabled the enactment of these policies – some were to ensure the

continuation of Black oppression and others to provide legal discourse in the fight for Black

equality and equity.

Opposition to Putnam's Social Capital Theoretical Framework

Primarily, critics dismiss the ideas of social relationships, which they believe is no

substitute for empowerment, advocacy, or mobilization which are at the core of community

development (Farrell, 2007). Despite the scope and empirical investigation, critics believe that

Bowling Alone distorts or ignores vital issues that any thorough analysis of American's political

chaos is inconceivable within its framework (DeFilippis, 2001; Boggs, 2001).

There three major critiques surrounding Putnam use of social capital indicators as a determination of positive community development and economic growth. First, critics believe there exist flaws in examining very complex social issues simply by using social capital indicators that signify cooperation and togetherness. Secondly, the issue with utilizing Putnam's instrument is that critics claims that social capital are not necessarily what is being measured (Bryson & Mowbray, 2005). Finally, the constructs of Putnam's Social Capital Survey do not provide empirical data that shows a consistent correlation between social capital and economic growth, but one that is unique to its application and circumstances. This is a fundamental premise that opposition to Putnam's theory fail to recognize and understand – collective activism is not the simplistic formation of a bowling league, but the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from these relationships (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). It is these connections – that form the tangible substances needed to realize the social and political agenda in ways that enable the level and type of activism the leads to the sustainability of urban [Black] communities (Putnam, 2000; Boggs, 2001).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) intersects with Putnam's Social Capital

Urban sociologist, Xavier de Souza Briggs, warns us to beware of our interpretation of social capital, because networks and collective norms of reciprocity are generally good inside the network, but external effects are not always positive (Putnam, 2000). It was social capital that can be attributed to some of America's atrocities – the bombing of the Alfred B. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City by Timothy McVeigh, the hanging of Blacks throughout the south by members of the Klu Klux Klan, and community activist that prohibited the sale of homes to Blacks in communities designated for whites only (Katznelson, 2005; Wright, 2004; Putnam, 2000). These were collective actions based on community norms, trust and reciprocity that enable collective action.

According to Critical Race Theory (CRT), the research lens should be shifted away from the utilization of deficit analytical lens in which white middle-class communities are the standard-bearer (Yosso, 2005). Morris (2002) builds on the arguments of Derrick Bell – how race and racism historically shape the condition of Blacks educational conditions and thereby Black communities. The development and implementation of the St Louis Public School desegregation program is an example of Derrick Bells' interest convergence theory. The 1954 Brown v Board of Education decision denied the doctrine of separate but equal schooling. As cited in the opinion, black schools were inherently unequal to white schools in terms of resources, facilities, and opportunities (Brown v Board of Education, 1954). As written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, in the Brown v Board opinion, "Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group" (Brown v Board of Education, 1954, p. 5, lines 30 - 33). To address these issues of inequity in the U.S. educational system, the busing program was the tool used by St. Louis county districts to desegregate their schools. This caused severe declines in the existence of Black community-based schools which negatively impacted the sustainability of Black communities due to massive school closings, blight, and disinvestment. The busing program continued for decades because it was a financial windfall for participating white suburban districts (Morris & Morris 2002). An argument can be made that the desegregation policies used to enact the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that deemed the segregation of public schools unconstitutional, actually exacerbated the social and economic condition of Black communities.

While the social capital of Black communities in the city deteriorated due to school closing, declining property values, and severed relationships, white communities used desegregation revenue to invest in their community schools and neighborhoods (Morris & Morris, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Bell discusses the framework for communal bonded schools to build relationships between urban schools and African American families and communities as a means

for economic growth. Guided by an 11% cap of Black student enrollment, county school districts ensured that Black students that attended their school remained in the minority and ensured the district reaped tremendous financial gains through the busing program (Woodward, 2011 & United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1977). Thus, the law that was intended to increase educational access and opportunities for Black children, had a detrimental impact on the constructs of social capital and consequently Black community sustainability.

<u>Expanding Putnam's Theory</u>

Freire's historical perspective is the foundational establishment of leadership in which the belief in the ability of communities of oppressed and marginalized groups to enact social change. By bringing to the surface the critical consciousnesses the collective awareness of the systems and structures that affect their lives and communities (Freire, 1970) in ways that formulate activism. Freire's refers to this understanding as conscientization - a precursor to the realization that one's current state is not natural or permanent (Freire, 1970).

Author's Perspective

An essential part of gaining insight into the issues surrounding the sustainability of Black communities in St. Louis, Missouri included the reflection and examination of my own lived experiences. Growing up four lanes across Jefferson Avenue from the Pruitt-Igoe project and being personally connected to former residents of Meacham Park, a reflection enabled the qualitative perspective to this phenomenon which illuminated the issues surrounding the disappearing of these Black communities in St. Louis, Missouri. In retrospect, the reason for the level a mobility I experienced as a child – three moves between the ages of 11 through 13 – was because of changes in policies relating to subsidized housing – expired housing vouchers, a change in property eligibility to accept vouchers, or adjustment in eligible occupancy, conditions that were outside of the control of my mother. Within those three years, my mother moved three blocks up the road on Thomas Avenue, within the region of Black community on the second floor above a funeral home, and west St. Louis city on Theodosia to a four-family flat subsidized

apartment. The closures of Divoll and Stowe elementary, marked the beginning of the decline of

both the community of Divoll Elementary known as JeffVanderLou and Stowe elementary

located in west city. While I can recall minor protest in the closing of Divoll, there was no

community protest in the case of Stowe Elementary. The decline in the community was swift and

severe, vacant homes and apartments mark the demise of both communities.

        The closure and demolition of Pruitt-Igoe coincided with the dissolution of my

community as well. The community of both Thomas and Theodosia fell prey to blight, where

disinvestment, destabilization and disenfranchisement viciously collide – causing the eradication

of these Black communities. Whatever the case, it caused my mother to relocate into spaces that

were available to Black low-income families or in apartments that accepted housing vouchers. I

spent the remainder of my teen and young adult life on Westgate located at the edge of St. Louis

city adjacent to University City and on Bacon Street located in North St. Louis city just a few

miles from where I grew up as a child.

On Common Ground

        As an educator, I often shared stories with my students about my life - schooling, family,

and the community where I lived because I knew exposing our commonalities would build

positive relationships. Formulating this connection was a critical component in building a

classroom that functioned as a community – an environment with common ways of being and

thinking. This connection provided a psychological connection between me and my students – it

fostered a sense of common identity, mutual respect, and familiarity within the classroom. It was

this sense of community within the classroom that enabled teaching and learning to happen

without exorbitant amounts of time being spent on classroom rules and student behaviors,

because there was a common understanding about our purpose.

        Many of my high school students believed I grew up in a worry-free suburban

community without the traumatic mental and physical affect caused by the realities of racism and

poverty – social conditions intended to marginalize the existence of Black folks. They believed I

grew up in a community different from their own – outside of the harsh existence and often cruel St. Louis county communities of the Normandy and Riverview Gardens school districts where they lived. I would often try to enlighten them about our commonalities and dispute their claims of my suburban life by saying, "I grew up right across the street from "The Project." They still did not fully understand my meaning, so I would expound to clarify my life as a child, "I lived right across the street from Pruitt-Igoe," a mythical Black community notorious for criminal activities and abject poverty. They would often respond by saying, "You did not!" or "I bet you got beat up a lot." I would explain to them how growing up I did have to fight – not so much physically, but mentally and spiritually – to withstand the judgmental attitudes and actions from those who lived outside of my community. But, in retrospect as I noticed the changes that were occurring in my own community as a child and teenager, I was helpless not knowing what if anything I could do to alter the fact that the houses on my block were becoming vacant. Just as I was at their age, I was crippled by the insults and not fully capable of advocating for myself or my community in ways that would promote or sustain its existence – I just remember having to relocate and leave friends that I did not see again until adulthood.

The only thing that separated the Thomas Street community from the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex was the four lanes of traffic on Jefferson Avenue – two north and two south. Many white motorists used Jefferson to travel to and from the downtown community where they worked and socialized. It was also used by young Black male residents of Pruitt-Igoe as an opportunity to fulfill their dreams of financial prosperity and in some way a momentary disruption of the power structure. The opportunity for these Black young males came when the motorist sat in their cars waiting for the light at the intersection of Jefferson and Cass Avenue to change from red to green. The red light provided a lucrative opportunity for these Black young males to snatch a watch off the arm of white motorists as they traveled from their downtown community along Jefferson Avenue. Or these young Black males would hold up a cab or delivery drivers for money or goods as they traveled along Jefferson. Sometimes they were

successful in their venture, but on some occasions, they would meet their demise. There were often struck down by a vehicle while running through lanes of traffic trying to escape back into the housing complex or shot by a truck driver defending property and person.

I would share with my students the era of the 1960s and 70s in which I lived on Thomas Avenue across the street from Pruitt-Igoe, in a community that cared for those in need and protected the neighborhood's children from harm. Those in need of a cup of sugar, a few eggs, a loaf of bread or a quart of milk, to close the gap between hunger and the next payday or food stamps knew the community would provide. Also, the children in the neighborhood were protected by a common set of values that all parents shared and enforced – just as in Meacham Park. The adults in the community did not hesitate to let a child know if they were being "fast" or "mannish" and would inform your parent if you behaved in ways that were outside of the community norms. But, often missed in these moments, was what I was trying to convey. The understanding that the challenges they were facing in their neighborhoods were no different than what I experienced growing up in the 1960s and 70s in north St. Louis city's JeffVanderLou community.

Although, we were all isolated in our confining community, we still had hopes and dreams. We were all held together by common hardship and most severely, the veils and barriers that stood between us and opportunity (Winters, 2016). One of the most veiled secrets was that St. Louis University was about five miles away from where I lived, but I did not know it existed. The words college and university were not part of everyday conversation spoken in my house, school, or community and twenty years later my students revealed, not often spoken in their homes. As I shared my stories with them, the most important message I was trying to convey is that they possessed the capacity to determine their destiny in very significant ways – they have the power to determine their future and the future of their communities.

<u>The Community Where We Lived</u>

As a child growing up at 2610 Thomas Street in the Black JeffVanderLou community in north St. Louis city. Where the four lanes of Jefferson Avenue symbolized much more than just a thoroughfare traveled by white motorists during the week to travel to and from their downtown jobs. Jefferson Avenue was also the: (1) boundary established by my mother in which my sisters and I were forbidden to cross; (2) route of the annual Veiled-Prophet Parade reminding this Black community of America's social order; (3) boundaries that defined two distinct Black communities separated by different mental stigmas; and (4) place that evoked fear in my mind about the dangers that could be perpetrated by people on the other side of Jefferson Avenue that looked like me. These elements established the social construct in which two distinct communities are developed and the ability of these communities to thrive – support the well-being of its residents – were governed by the same social structure. As a child, I saw Pruitt-Igoe as a community of project boys who caused enormous harm to themselves and fear to the surrounding communities. But as an adult, I believe the demise of the Pruitt-Igoe and annexations of Meacham Park were political and economic decision motivated by social beliefs about marginalized groups.

<u>Challenges of Black Community Living</u>

The parental rules were vigorously enforced – be in the house before the streetlights come on, do not leave the block; and under no circumstances, cross Jefferson Avenue. These rules were the JeffVanderLou Thomas Street community norms enforced by well-intentioned parents guided by a belief system that discipline – verbal and physical – would protect their child from harm. While these rules were well-intentioned safety norms for parents in Black communities, they also hindered the ability of children living in these communities to identify opportunities and expand social experiences. Everything I knew about the world was confined to one block bordered by Thomas Street on the north, Jefferson Avenue on the east, Elliott Avenue on the west and an unknown street on the south – I did not know what was possible outside of these boundaries. I unknowingly was experiencing the oppressive nature of living in a Black

community – being confined by social and economic boundaries established based on race and poverty.

But, if I did not have that protection early in life, if I had been faced with the harsh reality of poverty and racism, and if my mother had shared her life as a share cropper working in the cotton fields in Arkansas – how would that have shaped my existence? Maybe I was protected - by a mother who understood how discrimination and racism could lead to complacency and despair. The topics of family conversations were not about the social conditions of the 1960s and 70s during the height of the civil rights era, nor was it about opportunities that were unavailable for a child growing up in the Black communities of JeffVanderLou and Pruitt-Igoe.

I do not know which is more heart wrenching, growing up as a child not knowing that my existence was marginalized by a social structure that dictated the space in which I was permitted to exist or realizing as an adult the impact this social structure had on my existence. While learning was important, there was no talk of high school or college, no direction as to what the opportunities were after leaving grade school. It was not until my freshman year of college that I was "inadvertently" made aware by the financial aid office, college professors, guest speakers from the St. Louis Symphony, and other students that I was poor and disadvantaged.

We often look to scholars or noteworthy individuals to define, explain, and clarify the urban experience and derive solutions to the problems that exist within Black communities and schools. Morris (2009) insists the policy debate on how to improve education for Black children must include the voices of Black educators. By not recognizing when race enters the room, within the historical context of racial exclusion, segregation, and discrimination, policies often fail to address issues of racism and recognize the impact they have on the prosperity of Black folks (Horsford, 2014).

The research showed that educational, economic, and racial disparities have widened between the rich and the poor in the United States (Mullen & Kealy, 2013). The literature encompasses economical, historical, theoretical, and practical accounts relating to race and its

roles in the disenfranchisement of citizens in urban communities. Racial Literacy is essential, when it comes to schooling, employment, and housing - all critical components in community sustainability domains. There is no community plan like the plan for today's suburban heroin and opioid users where policy makers believe that these individuals are victims of their circumstances. So again, the intersectionality of policy, laws and race are viewed in a way that does not find adequate solutions for Black citizens – who have just as white citizens – fallen victim to their circumstances. The over-policing and criminalization of Black communities play a significant role in the sustainability of Black communities and the ability of the community to foster prosperity for its residents (Boyles, 2015).

My students were familiar with the myths of Pruitt-Igoe that lived long after it was demolished in 1976. The demolition of Pruitt-Igoe spread across Jefferson Avenue onto Thomas Street devouring homes and rendering residents unable to stop the elimination of their community. But, just like north St. Louis city, the Meacham Park community has undergone some form a colonization. A common fate of many Black St. Louis communities that were systematically stripped of essential resources and lacked the ability to formulate the advocacy needed for sustainability (Putnam, 2000).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

During periods of economic and demographic change, efforts to understand, measure and strengthen social capital, can provide generalizable analytical tools (Noy, 2008) that can be used by communities to effectively take strategic action to improve their circumstances (Chazdon et al., 2013). During 2007 and 2008, to assess the social capital in a community, a grounded conceptual framework was created by the University of Minnesota and piloted in four Minnesota rural communities (Chazdon et al., 2013). The purpose of this pilot was to identify the social infrastructure that characterized a balance of social capital – bonding, bridging, and linking networks – that existed in rural communities that resulted in effective community action (Chazdon et al., 2013; Putnam, 2000). This research found that when there is an imbalance in the strength of bonding and bridging networks, communities encounter a variety of problems and find it difficult to engage in effective collective activism (Chazdon et al., 2013) in ways that can better their lives.

Research Design and Justification

The basic qualitative research approach will be used because there is a need to explore the phenomenon of Black community sustainability from multiple perspectives – gentrified and existing residence of Meacham Park. The use of this design will provide a better explanation of how social capital influenced the sustainability of Meacham Park during 1996 and 1999 (Putnam, 2000; Chazdon et al., 2013). Using quantitative data is insufficient in finding extenuating circumstances that should be considered in the analysis when making policy decisions (Chazdon et al., 2013).

The social capital conceptual framework that will be used in this qualitative study – based on Putnam's (1993, 2000) social capital theory– was developed by the University of Minnesota's Extension Center for Community Vitality (Chazdon et al., 2013). The research conducted by the Extension group led to the development of the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT or

SOCAT). This examination used the framework of SOCAT, based on Putnam's Social Capital

Instrument (SCI), that was developed by this group to examine the characteristics of the social

capital that existed during 1990 to 1999 in the Black community of Meacham Park. The purpose

of this examination was to determine the unique social infrastructures that existed in Meacham

Park during 1990 to 1999 that would have enabled or hindered community sustainability. The

design of this study enabled the examination of the characteristics of the social capital that existed

in the Meacham Park community. The examination identified the impact indicators such as social

networks, norms, social trust, and engagement that facilitated coordination and cooperation

within the community (Putnam, 1993) had on the current level of sustainability. In social capital

research, it is generally agreed that basic indicators that measures trust, civic or community

engagement, political participation and social support are important (van Kemenade, 2001). This

study examined whether or not the political decisions made, that affected the sustainability of the

Meacham Park community, were influenced by the level of social capital that was present during

the time significant change occurred in the community.

Instrument

The instrument (see Appendix A) that will be used, is based on Putnam's Social Capital

Instrument (SCI), contains key components from the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT or

SCAT) developed through the Social Capital Initiative at the World Bank. The design and field

testing of SOCAT represents a first step toward the development of a uniform measure of social

capital (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). Growing empirical evidence indicates that social

capital is best measured using a variety of qualitative and/or quantitative instruments. Therefore,

key components that captured the unique conditions of Black urban community experience were

used to measure the level of social capital in Meacham Park during the period of significant

change.

This tool was developed through literature review of four rural communities, which

included the completed surveys of 1,293 adults. The objective of the tool is to measure the

interaction of social capital with other development indicators to assess whether social capital

contributes to or erodes economic and social development (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002).

The research identified seven domains that could be used to conduct a community sustainability

study. The survey instrument rated the communities across seven domains that were determined

to affect community growth and sustainability (Chazdon et al., 2013). The foci of these six

domains are as follows:

1. Bonding Trust
2. Bonding Engagement
3. Bridging Trust
4. Bridging Engagement
5. Linking Trust
6. Linking Engagement
7. Efficacy

The University of Minnesota - Extension piloted the SCAT to the 1,293 adults in four

communities. The sample size in each community varied from 168 to 465 residents (Chazdon et

al., 2013). Internal reliability testing showed the Cronbach's Alpha for bonding trust (0.669);

bonding engagement (0.764); bridging trust (0.808); bridging engagement (0.800), linking trust

(0.786), linking engagement (0.788) and efficacy (0.835), with only one of the seven below 0.7

(Chazdon et al., 2013). Confirmatory factor analysis shows good fit of the data with the seven

sustainability domains. Convergent validity of the seven survey scales was conducted using the

guidelines developed by Cohen (1988) to determine if the correlations made theoretical sense

(Chazdon et al., 2013). All correlations among the constructs were statistically significant.

The full text of the interview guidelines and the questionnaire of the SOCAT has been made

available in the annex of the text Understanding and Measuring Social Capital (Grootaert, 2013).

The instructional toolkit for the application of the SOCAT is available from the World Bank by

accessing www.worldbank.org/socialdevelopment.

Procedures

The triangulation of qualitative data was collected via individual interviews,

videos/pictures, and document analysis. This data was used to refine, extend, and explain the

general picture (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002) of community sustainability in Meacham Park.

The qualitative data collected from participants via interviews included attitudes, opinions,

behaviors, beliefs, actions, interactions, involvement, emotions, and sentiment each experienced

while living in the Meacham Park community. The interviews were followed by a regional

examination of Meacham Park that included a critical review of published videos/pictures that

provided data relating to physical aesthetics, attributes, character, and tone of Meacham Park.

This review was driven in part by the themes that surfaced during individual interviews. Finally,

document analysis provided statistical data relating to political, social, and economic dynamics

that existed the in community. The data collected from the videos/pictures and document

analysis phase of the study was coded based on the components of Putnam's social capital theory,

as well as those identified during individual interviews.

The four variables used in this study are: (1) civic engagement/action; (2) interpersonal

trust; (3) economic security and welfare; and (4) confidence in government. These variables were

used to determine the type and level of influence social capital had on the changes that occurred

in the Meacham Park. Specifically, the significant impact on the community during 1990 to

1999. These four variables were chosen for use in this study because research has determined

that sufficient levels of validity and reliability exist in measuring social capital (Grootaert & Van

Bastelair, 2002) when examining these components.

Participants

The essential component of the selected participants is how their presence in the

community collided with the politics `associated with the 1992 annexation of Meacham Park.

This component of the examination was conducted via interviews of past and current residents

that resided in the Meacham Park community for as many as 74 years and as few as 2 years. The

five individuals included three males and two females; consisting of varying levels of community

involvement; and ranging from 45 to 74 years of age. The initial contacts were established via

community events, organization meetings, phone calls and many intimate in-person conversations

with different individuals about lived memories; stories of betrayal; hurt about what was; regrets

about not knowing; and anger about what happened to the Meacham Park community and its

residents. A continuation of these conversations, many on the streets in the community,

culminated into the identification of five participants - four convenience interviews and one

documented testimony. Table 1 below shows the demographics of the participants.

Table 1: Interview Participants' Demographics Summary

Code Name	Age	Sex	Race	Years in the Community	Interview Location
Wil	45	M	B	17 – 18 years	Off-Site School
Roger	56	M	B	16 years	Park/Home
Carol	-	F	B	2 years	Park/Phone
Brad	74	M	B	74 years	Community Church
Patton*	60+	F	B	Unknown	Newspapers/Videos/Public Forum

*Sources: Interviews from newspapers, magazines, videos, websites, and public forum

The interviews took place over ten months of dialogue with Meacham Park residents

eager to tell their stories. Through their personal stories, the five participants corroborated the

character of the community as having a close-knit social structure; bonding forms of community

action and involvement; poor, but self-sufficient economic conditions; and distrust in Kirkwood

government (Jackson & Smith, 1988; Speer, 1998; Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015).

The five participants, one through publications, responded to a set of open-ended

questions derived from the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT) based on the work of

Putnam's social capital instrument (SCI) published in 2000. The survey instrument provided an

organized means to collect data from four areas – civic engagement; interpersonal trust;

confidence in government; and economic security and welfare. Participants also responded to

indirect inquiries relating to bonding and bridging social capital in the specific areas of trust and

engagement.

Type of Information

The type of qualitative data that was collected/obtained from participants were attitudes,

opinions, behaviors, beliefs, actions, interactions, involvement, and sentiment each experienced

while living in the Meacham Park community. Qualitative data was collected via interviews,

videos/pictures, and document analysis.

Role and Expectation of the Subjects

The role of the human subjects was to respond to qualitative survey questions and engage

in dialogue in response to prompts and questioning during the interview session. The participants

responded to survey questions and engaged in verbal dialogue relating to social capital domains.

Methods of Maintaining Confidentiality

Study codes were used on data collection documents – written notes, and recorded

responses – to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. The identifying link between specific

participants and study documents are housed in a restricted separate location that is only

accessible by the principal investigator.

Population/Sample

The human subjects are 18 years of age or older and previously and/or currently reside in

the community of Meacham Park, Missouri located in the south county St. Louis region during

the examination period. Also, archived video tape interviews and written testimonials are

included in the data set. The identification process is based on sampling criteria which include

formulation of a homogeneous group (education; age; gender; family structure) to ensure

contrasting opinions; and the size was determined by the sought-after level of input that is

negatively impacted when groups are too large or too small. To minimize these issues, a typical

size of the sample is five to ten participants. In part, the decision to limit the examination to five

participants was due to the exhaustion on content.

Sampling Technique

All participants have the shared experience of residing in the Meacham Park community.

Since the population of interest will be difficult to find, the principal investigator will:

- used a quasi-snowball method to formulate a 5 to10-person sample size by contacting
  known persons who lived in Meacham Park.
- posed questions to ensure each respondent meet the participation criteria.

- sent electronic participant consent forms to the identified participants
- contacted identified participants via telephone and inform them of the time, date, and location of the individual interview to verify and ensure attendance.
- contacted identified participants – 1 month, 1 week, 1 day – to ensure availability.

Treatment of the Data

A qualitative data analysis was conducted to identify themes that resulted from the individual interviews; documented testimony; and video and document analysis relating to how Putnam's impact indicators influenced community sustainability in Meacham Park, Missouri. The analysis of collected data was triangulated to identify the level strengths and weaknesses of community sustainability across four domains aligned to Putnam's social capital four indicators.

Summary

If a community is to be sustainable it requires the comprisable existence of certain social and economic resources to ensure the needs of the people within the community are being met. The ability to sustain Black communities in ways that ensures prosperity for its people is systemically contingent upon public policy and significantly linked to the whim of policy makers. Access and opportunity are the overarching themes essential to the ability of resources, such as churches, community centers, schools, civic organizations, businesses, and housing, to translate into meaningful avenues on the road to community sustainability in Black occupied spaces.

It is the capacity to influence political, economic, social, and educational policies that impact the sustainability of property and people. When politics interact with policy through the lens of interest convergence, it tends to have an adverse impact on the sustainability of urban communities and its residents. But Putnam's social capital theory provides the tools needed to assess the level of social capital that exist within a community, thereby enabling an understanding of how and the means to measure the impact of collective activism (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). This theory can provide the remaining residents in the Meacham Park community with the tools to identify and develop the appropriate level of social capital needed to ensure economic growth in ways that promote community sustainability.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Overview

Robert Putnam's social capital theory – is predicated on the premise that interpersonal trust; civic engagement; confidence in government; and economic security and welfare are the norms that enable community sustainability (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). This qualitative study was conducted to determine the influence of social capital – collective activism – on policy decisions that resulted in the varying levels of community sustainability that currently exist in Meacham Park, Missouri. The examination of life experiences of residents, written documents, and visual artifact supports the argument that prior to the campaign that led to the 1992 annexation by the City of Kirkwood Missouri, Meacham Park was a viable community – able to sustain itself economically, politically and socially (Randall, 2016; Speer, 1998; Boyles, 2015; US Department of the Interior, 2002). Actions by Kirkwood politicians leading up to the 1992 annexation, that eradicated approximately 55 of the remaining 135 acres of the Meacham Park community, (Randall, 2016; Randall, 2016; Kee, 1999) left it vulnerable for varying forms of colonization (Bergstrom et al., 2014). This examination provided evidence that political tactics and economic constraints strategically hindered the community's ability to acquire the collective action needed to influence policy decisions relating to the 1992 annexation (Putnam, 2000).

Impact on Social Capital - Interviews in Lieu of Focus Groups

Although, the snowball approach uncovered twenty-two potential participants, getting them to agree to discuss their views in an open forum was problematic because the community had been fragmented by politics leading up to the 1992 annexation (Sutin, 1996; Shinkle, 2002; Bannerman-Menson, 1994). One resident stated, "I don't think you will get a focus group; we had those before and they lied about what we said, turned it all around."   One Participant also expressed concerns about sharing stories out of fear of losing what had been sustained after the 1992 annexation. Thirteen of the seventeen pre-interview participants expressed similar concerns

regarding a distrust from those they perceived as outsiders wanting something or only wanted to report about what was wrong with the Meacham Park community and its residents.

It was revealed that the 1992 annexation by Kirkwood had fragmented the Meacham Park community thus rendered the formation of a focus group impractical. Because of the distrust and in some cases self-preservation, forming a focus group was a challenge that halted the progress of the study. The current level of distrust and fear amongst the Meacham Park residents required a change from the focus group method of data collection. Also, since individual conversations, via phone calls or in-person, yield an openness about what happened in Meacham Park as it related to the 1992 annexation of the community - individual interviews were employed as part of the research methodology in lieu of a focus group.

Community Profile

The Meacham Park community was established in 1892 by Elzey E. Meacham a white real estate speculator who purchased approximately158 acres of land for $33,308 (Speer, 1998; Wright, 2004; Kohler, 2008; Recorder of Deeds retrieved November 2018).

Meacham Park Community Original Plat
Filed by Elzey E. Meacham on September 16, 1882
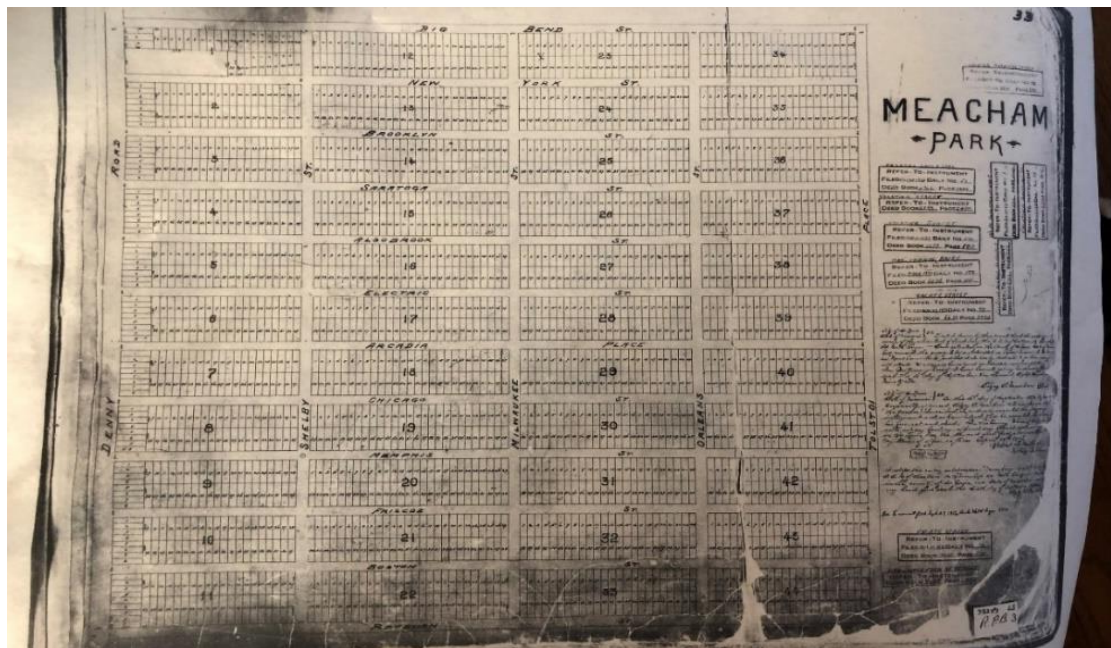
Map 1.1 Shows the region of Meacham Park prior to annexations by Kirkwood
Source: St. Louis County Office of Recorder of Deeds

The community was originally bounded by Big Bend Street on the north; Rayburn Street on the south; Denny Road (now Kirkwood Road) on the west; and Tolstol Place on the east (Recorder of Deeds retrieved November 2018). As shown in the map above, the area of the plat was eleven blocks long and four blocks wide (Speer, 1998; Recorder of Deeds retrieved November 2018).

Although a few of the 25 foot lots were sold to whites, most of the lots were sold to Blacks for $5 to $15 and due to segregation, the community became self-contained with its own churches, school, businesses, newspaper, police, and fire department (Wright, 2004; Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015). The Meacham Park community was enriched with Black history and arguably Elzey Meacham structured lots sizes in a manner that were affordable for Blacks. Currently, Meacham Park is 98% Black with a median household income of approximately $37,000 (Randall, 2016; Wright, 2004; Gross, 1994).

Throughout its inception, a deliberate effort has been to infuse the Meacham Park community with the culture, history and pride – a celebration of Black achievement. The community's street names are recognition of Black historical figures and related directly or indirectly to Black historical events (Speer, 1998; Boyles, 2015). For example, after recording of the original plat, Elzey Meacham renamed New York Street, Attucks Street, after the runaway slave Crispus Attucks, the first man to fall in the American Revolution; and Electric Street was named in recognition of Lewis Latimer, the only Black member of the Edison Pioneers (Speer 1998; Boyles 2015).

Because of racial discrimination, Meacham Park was a self-contained community – relying on social, economic and political entities that existed within the community. Leading up to the 1950s, Meacham Park had semiprofessional baseball, basketball and track and field teams (Speer, 1998). By the 1950's, Meacham Park had sixteen Black owned businesses - including grocery stores, beauty shops, auto repair services and neighborhood trash pickup (Randell, 2016; Wright, 2002; Speer, 1998). The examination provided evidence that the foundation of the community was its establishment of civic life (Wright, 2002; Speer 1998).

The community profile also revealed evidence that Meacham Park residents had a history

of activism aimed at sustaining the community. There were churches throughout the community,

a widespread sense of pride, tenacity, and neighborhood cohesion (Speer, 1998; Boyles, 2015;

Wright, 2002; Participants, 2018). The following table show the organizations that were

established and a summary of activism that existed in the Meacham Park community prior to the

annexation period.

Table 3: Meacham Park Community Organization
and Activism Prior to Annexations

Organization	Established	Activism	Capacity
Needlework Guild	1919	Made clothes for needy children at Booker T. Washington Elementary	13 members
Women's Community Club	1925	Fought for community improvements – after many years a water main was developed in the community	9 founders
Law Enforcement	1930s	1938 a Deputy Shariff was appointed to enforce laws and patrol the community	1 Deputy Shariff and community support
Fire Department	1936	Ten-dollar fee to volunteer; held carnival and by 1950s purchased a fire truck with proceeds.	12 – 15 members
The American Legion	1936	The center for social activities	17 members
Five Churches: The First Baptist Church; Church of God; Church of God in Christ; Catholic Mission; C.M.E St. Mary & the Pentecostal	Between 1907 until last recorded date of 1940.	Worship, outreach and congregation	Unable to verify

Sources: Meacham Park History: 1892 – 1989, Speer 1998 and St. Louis Disappearing Black
Communities, Wright 2004.

The data in Table 3 shows that the Meacham Park Community had a strong sense of civic

engagement and interpersonal trust aligned to Putnam social capital theory (Putnam, 2000). These

organizations summarized in the table were the source of collective civic actions, led by those

Meacham Park residents that saw a need to improve their condition through petitions; outreach;

self-reliance and interconnections which helped to sustain the community. Although, civic

engagement and interpersonal trust are essential components of community sustainability,

government influence and economic stability also play a key role (Putnam, 1993, 2000).

The 1957, 1968 and 1992 annexations of the community carved the current boundary

confined by Lindbergh and Big Bend Boulevards, Interstate 44 and Sappington Road (Randall

2018; Wright, 2004). The 1957 and 1968 annexations stripped the Meacham Park community of

much of its economic, and political structures (Wright, 2004; Randall, 2016) – which are the

foundations for maintaining and building social capital (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert & Van

Bastelair, 2002). Isolated with limited economic opportunities and political power, Meacham

Park residents and the community became increasingly dependent on and vulnerable to the City

of Kirkwood (Putnam, 2000; Jones, 2015; Boyles, 2015; Randall 2018).

Not only did the physical constraints negatively impacted the community but the

annexations caused a significant decline in its social structure (Jones, 2015; Randall, 2016).

Census data shows, the population in Meacham Park was cut in half between 1960 and 1970,

during the periods of the 1957 and 1968 annexations, from 2000 to 1200, respectively. The

Meacham Park population that once was approximately 2,000 had dwindled after each annexation

to 1,030 after the 1968 annexation; and to approximately 800 after the 1992 annexation (Shinkle,

2002; Randall, 2016). This is significant because the decline in population had a negative impact

on the community's ability to garner a sufficient level of social capital - Meacham Park lost many

of its original members as a result of the annexations (Palombo, Greene, Bjorkman, Naueiry &

Hankinson, 2015; Boyle, 2015).   It was the four decades of dismantling, disenfranchising, and

destabilizing Meacham Park that weakened its defenses against the systematic political approach

that enabled the 1992 annexation of the community (Putnam, 2000) to occur in ways that were

not beneficial to the Meacham Park community and its residents.

Dismantling the Community

This dismantling began in 1957 when property was taken from the Meacham Park

community through eminent domain to develop a Strip Mall annexed to the City of Crestwood

(Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016; Bjorkman et al., 2017). Although Meacham Park was opposed to

the proposal, the community was not included in the decision (Frel, 1958).   In a May 1958 St.

Louis Post-Dispatch article written by Frel entitled Meacham Park Ignored, she writes that the

annexation by Kirkwood of Meacham Parks commercial property would eliminate three fourths

of the community's present annual tax revenue. Since this annexation eliminated a significant

portion of Meacham Park's tax revenue, it crippled the community's economic security,

rendering it dependent and vulnerable to wealthier surrounding communities (Frel, 1958;

Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002) which included Kirkwood.

As illustrated in Map 1.2 below, this property seizure resulted in the extraction of four of

the forty-four plats located on the western border which was previously the business district of

the Meacham Park community that contained homes, families, and businesses (Frel, 1958; Speer,

1998; Randall, 2016).

<div align="center">
Meacham Park Community Plat
After the 1957 Annexation
</div>
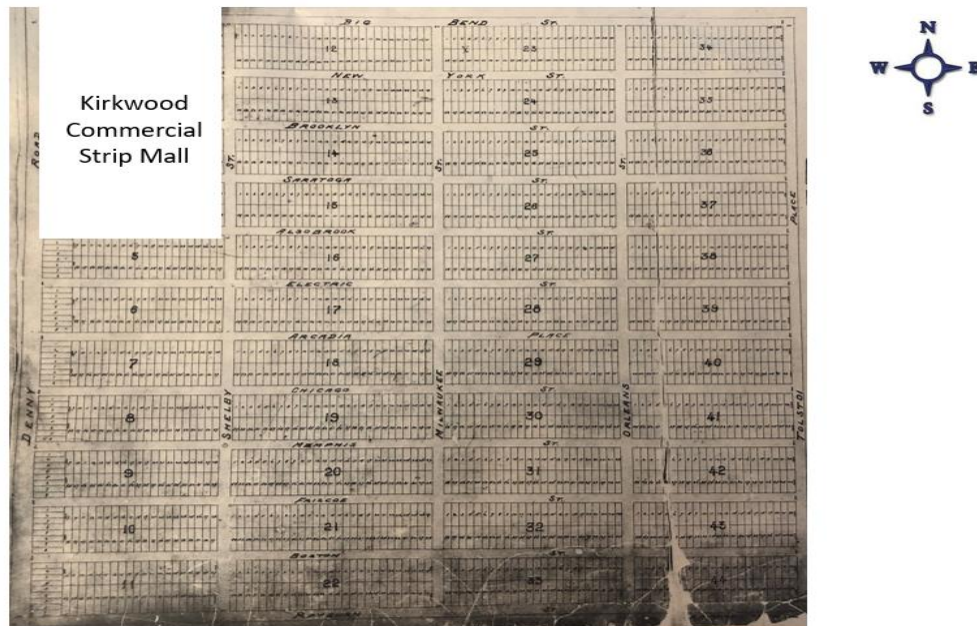
Map 1.2 Shows the sustained region of Meacham Park after the 1957 Annexation by Kirkwood. The annexed region is indicated by the white shaded area in the upper north-west corner of the community. The exact acreage was not confirmed, but four plats were extracted from the community – leaving 40 of the original 44 plats.

Most significantly, the 1957 annexation by Kirkwood caused the extraction of community businesses, business leaders and cultural landmarks – the theatre, corner store, pool hall and barber shop – traditionally, the spaces where social, political and economic conversations occur in Black communities were eradicated. These spaces provided the venue for social interaction and were essential to maintaining and strengthening the social networks in ways that increased social capital (Randall, 2016; Randall, 2016; Frel, 1958; Speer, 1998). Also, since the annexation was conducted without the involvement or consent of the Meacham Park community, the action negatively affected the level of trust the community had towards Kirkwood officials (Wallace, 1977).

What made an examination of the 1957 annexation relevant to the study is the impact this phenomenon had on the Meacham Park community's ability to influence future public policy decisions as a result of the decline in social capital (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). In a 1998 article written by Sutin in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a female resident stated, "I have no choice. The authority calls the shots." Tenants of the housing complex reported that they have not been told when they must move. Participant Brad stated, "they [Kirkwood] has a plan on paper already about what they are going to do with the rest of Meacham Park. When asked, "Do you think any of the community organizations that we talked about before can help?" In dismay, he questioned, "Can stop it? Then with desolation he stated, "They can't stop it." Participant Roger stated, "I believe it is a matter of time. Because it (Meacham Park) is going to go commercial."   Dismantling the community in this way, hindered its ability to formulate sufficient levels of social capital because it began the erosion of three of the four indicators relative to Putnam's theory – civic engagement; economic security and welfare; and confidence in government (Putnam, 2000).

The 1957 annexation was followed by the 1968 annexation through eminent domain and buy-outs for the development of Interstate 44. This seizure extracted approximately 10.5 of the remaining 40 plats, a reported 6.5 acres of the community located on the southern border of the

Meacham Park community (Randall, 2016, 2016).   As shown in Map 1.3 below, the 1968

annexation was a more intrusive extraction because it not only seized land, it established a

thoroughfare that formulated the argument that the region was an attractive site for future

developments (Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016).

Meacham Park Community Plat
After the 1968 Annexation
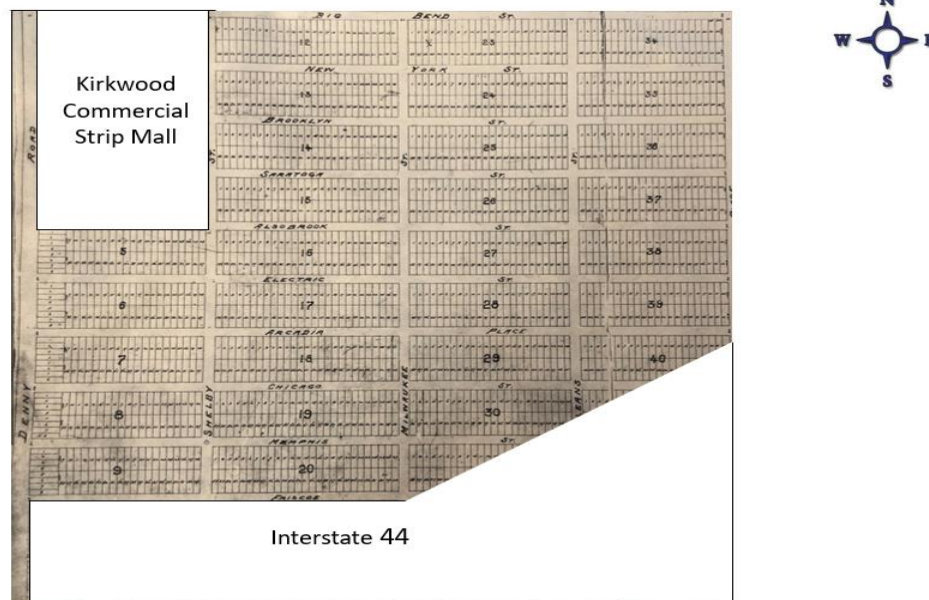
Map 1.3 shows the sustained region of the Meacham Park community after the 1968 annexation. The area shaded in white indicate the annexed region of the community to build Interstate 44 – which extracted the lower southern border and lower portion of the south-east corner of the community.

This redevelopment argument, coupled with blight, set the stage for future annexations –

the extraction of homes and business from the Meacham Park community. As a result of decades

of disenfranchisement and isolation, the community began to exhibit the characteristics of blight

– vacant buildings, dilapidated infrastructure and abject poverty (Randall, 2016). The process of

blighting the Meacham Park community began decades before Kirkwood's formal 1972

redevelopment plan. The contributing factors of blight were the: (1) 1968 Interstate 44

development caused a decline in Meacham Park's property values due to the proximity of noise

and clutter; (2) 1957 annexation caused the eradication of the business district which caused a

significant decline in tax revenue; and (3) the 1957 and 1968 annexation caused a significant

decline in population – cutting it in half between 1960 and 1970 (Randall, 2016) collapsing a

critical portion of its social structure. The continued effort to blight the community was part of

the 1972 plan, which sought to isolate Meacham Park from the surrounding more affluent

community by closing six of eight streets that intersect with Kirkwood (Randall, 2016).

The Kirkwood's 1972 Redevelopment Plan led to the most devastating extractions from

the Meacham Park community – the 1992 Annexation of Meacham Park. This annexation

eliminated ten of the remaining twenty-nine and a half plats of the Meacham Park community

leaving twenty-three of the original forty-four plats – eradicating 47.7% of the community. The

thick black line segment in Map 1.4 below illustrates the barrier, referred to as the "Berlin Wall,"

that separates Meacham Park from Kirkwood Proper. The map below also illustrates the area

carved out by the 1992 annexation.

Meacham Park Community Plat
After the 1992 Annexation to build Kirkwood Commons
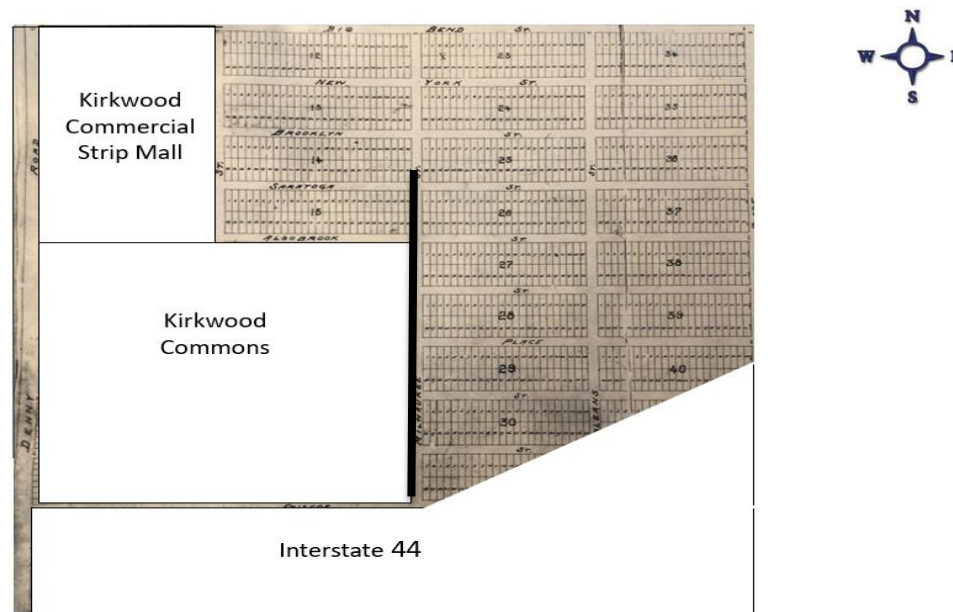
Map 1.4 shows the sustained region of the Meacham Park community after the 1992 annexation. The area shaded in
white indicate the annexed region of the community which extracted 10 plats from the western border referred as the
100 and 200 blocks of the community. If was reported that 55 to 60 acres of the community was extracted.

The 1992 annexation resulted in the most severe impact on all four constructs of social capital -

civic engagement; interpersonal trust; economic security and welfare; and confidence in

government that previously existed in the Meacham Park community. Not only did the 1992 annexation extend the borders of Kirkwood, it forced the evacuation of longtime Meacham Park residents; severed relationships among residents that had been developed over generations; and waged the hostile closure of Black businesses that existed in the community for decades (Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015).

During the time leading up to the 1992 annexation, the sixteen Black owned businesses that were established by the 1950s, were under siege and when the dust cleared, they were eradicated from the Meacham Park community. The extraction of 130 homes and 200 residents (Kee, 1999) – members of community organizations, business owners, and cultural and civic leaders were disconnected and could no longer effectively advocate on behalf of Meacham Parks' interests (Speer, 1998; Boyles, 2015). More significantly, the elimination of 55 acres managed to silence community voices (Randall, 2016). As reported in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a Meacham Park resident believed demolishing homes and replacing them with public housing contributed to the deteriorations of the community.   Four out of five participants expressed concerns that the public housing complex implanted people into the community that had different beliefs and culture than the original Meacham Park residents (Gross, 1994; Boyles, 2015; Putnam, 1993). As a result, the community became even more fragmented and isolated – interpersonal trust was waning, which limited the ability of the remaining residents to connect in ways that led to collective action towards a common good that was beneficial to the entire community (Putnam, 2000; Gross, 1994).

It is estimated that eighty percent of the previous Meacham Park residents who lived on the west side moved as a result of dismantling the community to accommodate the development needs of the 1992 annexation by Kirkwood (Kee, 1999). As a result, the remaining residents felt immobilized, hemmed in by I-44, constricted by the elimination of streets, and isolated by structures such as walls and fencing that separate "the poor Black community" of Meacham Park from the "affluent white community" of Kirkwood (Kee, 1999; Boyles, 2015).

Disenfranchising the Community

"When a Black community has been disenfranchised it often is faced with social isolation, economic and political alienation, and aggressive policing" (Boyles, 2015, p. 157; Putnam, 1993). In 1940, then urban planner Bartholomew assessed the future of Kirkwood and cited that scattered Negro developments posed a disadvantage to all citizens and should be corrected in the near future (Randall, 2016; Butler & Robson, 2001; Boyles, 2015). To expedite the redevelopment process, Kirkwood enacted a plan to isolate and blight the Meacham Park Community (Randall, 2016; Jones, 2015). This device is used to legitimize the removal of particular users of the place and space, because they can be easily propagated as threatening to the revitalization, renewal, and redevelopment of the new and improved urban landscape (Jones, 2015; Randall, 2016).

The deployment of urban renewal was touted by those in power as the magical solution to social and economic ills of the poor Black Meacham Park community (Jones, 2015; Boyles, 2015). To change the tone of annexation and make it more palatable, the public media, primarily the Post-Dispatch, propagated the process as a charitable public service mission to save Meacham Park from poverty, crime and despair (Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015). This was evident in articles written in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch which often propagated the annexation as a good faith effort on the part of Kirkwood to revitalize, renew, reorganize, and redevelop the Meacham Park community (Bower, 1991; Jackson & Smith., 1988; Bannerman-Menson, 1994; Sutin, 1996; Kee, 1999). These code words for annexation, colonization, and gentrification are intended to legitimize the removal of those deemed threatening to the new plan for utilizing the space (Jones, 2015; Boyles, 2015).

Social issues such as crime are racialized through the media's depictions of Black communities without an explanation of mitigating circumstances that exacerbates the condition (Solorzano, 2001). While disenfranchised poor Black communities such as Meacham Park experience a disproportionate rate of crime, they also experience high underemployment and

unemployment; social isolation; and limited access to basic resources; contributing to desperate

acts of survival (Boyles, 2015; Putnam, 1993). As reported by residents in the Meacham Park

community, over-aggressive policing, led to inflated cause data used as justification for the action

by Kirkwood to annex Meacham Park. An examination of crime data during the five years

leading up to the 1992 Annexation by Kirkwood, by many accounts the high crime rate in

Meacham Park was a determining factor in the decision to annex the community.

However, an examination of crime data from 1985 through 1990 contradicts the claims

that crime in Meacham Park was ubiquitous. During this five-year period, Meacham Park was

serviced by the St. Louis County Police Department (SLCP). According to SLCP, crime data

showed three reported incidents over the five-year period, 1988, 1989 and 1990 – SLCP had no

data showing incidents in 1985, 1986, and 1987. Table 4.1 is a summary of the incident reports

obtained from the SLCP relating to crime that occurred in the Meacham Park community during

1985 through 1995 – five years prior to the 1992 annexation.

Table 4.1: St. Louis County Police Department
Incident Reports from 1985 through 1990

Year	Date	Incident: Nature	Number of Incidents
1985	N/A	No incidents reported	0
1986	N/A	No incidents reported	0
1887	N/A	No incidents reported	0
1988	10/2/1988	Assault First Degree: Crimes Against Person	1
1989	9/28/1989	Robbery/Assault in First Degree: Shooting	1
1990	3/29/1990	Property Damage: Destruction of Property	1

Source: St. Louis County Police Department incident reports 88-250486, 89-246453, & 90-70654

Inquiries into St. Louis County Police reports revealed three crime incidents in Meacham Park

during 1985 through 1990 – data which does not support or justify the need for Kirkwood to

annex the community. In examining the level of crime in Meacham Park, inquiries with the St.

Louis County and Kirkwood Police departments revealed that there was no evidence to support

the claim that crime was rampant in the Meacham Park Community. However, interviewees did

express their concerns about the level of crime in a community where doors could be left

unlocked and residents had keys to their neighbors' homes. Most of the concern related to the

sell and use of drugs.   Participant Bobby stated, "Long ago we had some of everything, shooting

a little dice and everything. Folks sitting down there [in the park] smoking dope." Roger who

lived in the community for 16 years until 1986, stated, "It was getting, pretty bad out there, I

mean it was a lot of shootings a lot of stabbings and things like that, so it's pretty bad." He

attributed the rise in crime on the newcomers – the residents of the county housing complex

known as Chocolate City. The housing complex that was part of Kirkwood's 1972

redevelopment plan and instrumental in placing a wedge between residents in the community –

among the original and newcomers (Boyles, 2015). Also, reports of rising crime rates were

secondhand accounts and hearsay by those living outside of the Meacham Park community and

had a vested interest in communicating a rationale for annexation. Although, there are no

documents to support Rogers claims and similar references written in newspapers, the claims of

criminal activity in Meacham Park remains an important component in the redevelopment

narrative (Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016). But the egregious criminal activities that would warrant

or justify the narrative that led to the 1992 annexation of Meacham Park was not supported by

police, documentation, or interview data that was revealed during this examination.

In the period following the 1992 annexation, crime data showed no significant criminal

activities in the Meacham Park community. The Table 4.2 below is a summary of police involved

incidents that occurred in Meacham Park under the surveillance of Kirkwood Police Department.

Table 4.2: City of Kirkwood, Missouri Police Incident Report
Accumulative Data from March 1998 and April 1998

Incident	Larceny	Disturbance/ Fight	Juvenile Problem	Drug Possession	Suspicious/ Complaint
Total	9	18	5	2	2
Incident	Disorderly	Assault	Burglary	Stolen Vehicle	Destruction of Property
Total	1	7	1	1	4
Incident	Alarm	Zoning Violation	Noise/Loitering	Parking	Emergency Assistance
Total	6	4	4	2	14

Source: City of Kirkwood Police Department Incident Reports dated March and April 1998.

A summary of the crime report included incidents of larceny, disturbance/fight; juvenile problem, drug possession; destruction of property; zoning violation; and emergency assistance. While these are actions that might warrant police involvement, they are not incidents that should justify the eradication of a community (Boyles, 2015). As shown in Table 4.2, eighty incidents were reported during this period – of which twenty-five of the eighty incidents, approximately 31%, involved potential bodily harm to the victim – disturbance/fight and assault. Also, fourteen of the eighty, approximately 17.5%, involve needed emergency assistance and the remaining forty-one incidents, approximately 51.3% are minor offenses. Policing Meacham Park was the conflation of several elements – the need to characterize the community as crime ridden and control the mobility of the residents. "The notion of crime, potentially left unaddressed, is a common tactic used to elicit political support for seemingly unpopular issues" (Boyles, 2015, p. 89). Although, the City of Kirkwood sample crime reports dated March and April 1998, did not support the claims of egregious criminal activity in the Meacham Park community, propaganda continued to be used to justify annexation. Also, Meacham Park became a blighted community – meaning it was characterized by vacancies, dilapidated infrastructure and deep-seated poverty exacerbated by political and social disenfranchisement (Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015). Decades of blight had taken its toll on Meacham Park and by the mid-1970s the community became ripe for annexation (Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016; Jones, 2015; Speer, 1998). The crime narrative and blighted conditions became important components to promote the critical need for Kirkwood to annex the Meacham Park community.

The examination of community sustainability indicators outlined in Putnam's theory – civic engagement/action; interpersonal trust; economic security and welfare; and confidence in government – revealed a slow and deliberate process aimed at disenfranchising the Meacham Park community. Kirkwood politics and politicians were systematic in extracting residents from political discourse; propagating criminality; ensuring poverty and economic dependency; and creating social isolation. These tactics were the systems used to disenfranchise Meacham Park –

in ways that prohibited the formulation of the social capital needed to sustain a substantial portion

of the Meacham Park community.

<u>Destabilizing the Community</u>

The destabilization, which began three decades prior to the 1992 annexation, impacted

the community's ability to sustain a significant portion of Meacham Park. The decimation of the

once vibrant self-sustained Meacham Park community is supported by visual artifacts that

showed the past existence of community landmarks such as the James Milton Turner School

graduating classes, mapping of a vibrant business district, and community civic organizations and

churches (Speer, 1998) that were eradicated by decades long plans to annex the community.

Through activism in the form of community petitions and school board testimony by parents in

the Meacham Park community, there is a history of activism. Beginning with William Jones who

fought in the 1960s for community improvements; Joe Cole's decades long actions to influence

the lives of young Black males; to the work of Harriette Patton who opposed the 1992 annexation

and continues to garner collective concerns about how to sustain what is left of Meacham Park

(Speer, 1998; Kohler, 2008). It was the collective and individual actions of Meacham Park

residents that moved the community forward, but progress was contained by decades of

annexations by the Kirkwood political system. This resulted in a decline in interpersonal relations

that would have enabled collaborative voices for the common good of the community (Putnam,

2000; Adam et al., 2013; Boyles, 2015).

In some cases, community activism for cause took decades to come to fruition and in

many cases the fight yields no return. The Meacham Park community faced a barrage of legal

proceedings that resulted in the dissolution of Black owned businesses; the removal of longtime

residents that were instrumental in past political actions that resulted in community improvement.

For example, the argument by residents of Meacham park not to close the Turner School,

formally known as the Meacham School, fell on deaf ears and the community school closed its

doors in 1977. According to the developer Steve Beck, who bought the school in 2004, the

decision to sell was based on the lack of funding support from Kirkwood and the interest in the

tax revenue Kirkwood would receive from the project (Ezell, 2008). Since the wealth of a

community is determined by the presence and capacity of effective educational systems, closing

J. Turner School was a continuation of Kirkwood plan to dismantle the community. This action

by Kirkwood continued to negatively impact the Meacham Park social structure and economic

capacity, limiting its ability to formulate the social capital needed for sustainability (Putnam,

2000).

Social activism was also present when Pickett, the owner of the barber shop located at

1010 Milwaukee Street and a nearby house at 305 New York Street sparred with Kirkwood

officials for several years. After years of complaints, Pickett filed an appeal in Franklin County

where she lived after a previous ruling to demolish her business was upheld by the Kirkwood City

Counsel (Riley, 1998). The reason Kirkwood upheld the ruling was because they needed the land

to relocate residents that were being displaced by the 1992 annexation – the relocation was part of

the annexation agreement. Pickett had to go outside of the Kirkwood political system, to get an

equitable hearing of the case (Riley, 1998). Still after winning the appeal, Kirkwood proceeded

to take ownership of the property under the tactics of eminent domain. This is one of many

incidents by which Kirkwood annexation politics gained ownership of Meacham Park property to

build the strip mall, Interstate 44 and finally Kirkwood Commons.

The economic security that previously existed was destroyed through imminent domain

brought on by the 1957 and 1968 annexations. The community had minimal confidence in

Kirkwood officials, there was a divide among residents in the once close-knit community, and the

potential for financial growth and opportunities was in the control of Kirkwood politicians

(Boyles, 2015; Sutin, 1996; Gross, 1994; Brown, 2008). The actions by Kirkwood officials

leading up to the 1992 annexation had severely eroded the level of social capital that is vital to

community sustainability as defined by Putnam's theory (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Tzanakis, 2013).

In a 2008 St. Louis Post-Dispatch article written by S. Brown, residents stated, "The tension and

divide were a deep-rooted problem that goes back much further than Johnson and Thornton." In the same article, another Meacham Park resident stated, "What you have are people not being heard with no representation in city government."

Overall, the examination revealed a systematic approach to dismantling, disenfranchising and destabilizing the Meacham Park community structure. The relationships that would have enabled collective action needed for community sustainability had been weakened by decades of politics – involving eminent domain and hostile takeovers; court hearings, appeals and decisions; community and individual isolation; and economic barriers and constraints (Boyles, 2015; Putnam, 2000). The existence of social networks and civic engagement will strengthen the ability of a community to act when confronted with "poverty and vulnerability; resolving disputes; and taking advantage of opportunities" (Casey & Christ, 2005, p. 828).

The Intersectionality of Putnam's Social Capital Theory and Meacham Park Sustainability

The level of social capital is influence by the intersectionality of race, poverty, culture, and class. This intersectionality elicited a set of biases, beliefs, and social conditions that justified unethical and inequities that enabled the adoption of policies that contributed to the dissolution of a significant portion of the Meacham Park community – through exploitation, marginalization, and violence (Young, 2013). The ideas and beliefs that residents in the community needed to be saved from themselves where justified because of their race and socioeconomic standing. However, disenfranchisement that contributed to the decline in economic growth; dismantling the community in ways that contributed to the inability to maintain social connections; and destabilizing through tactics of isolation and silence of the collective voice are ignored.

The Mediation Agreement, executed in 2010 by the US Department of Justice, was set into motion to address long standing racial complaints and grievances by Meacham residents against the city of Kirkwood, involving a history of racial and class discrimination. This agreement charged the City of Kirkwood to inform, educate, advocate, and aid in resolving these complaints. The agreement also required the Kirkwood Committee to report findings of

discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation to the City Council, the same

governing body charged with said discriminatory practices and policies. While the Mediation

Agreement fell short of resolving issues relating to racial and economic discrimination, it did

provide evidence of the challenges facing Meacham Park residents as they tried collectively and

individually to navigate the politics and practices of the 1992 annexation.

It was revealed that inequities in the systems used by Kirkwood to annex Meacham Park

influenced how the level of social capital eroded over several decades leading up to the 1992

annexation. This erosion of social capital – civic action; interpersonal trust; economic stability

and confidence in government factored into the eradication of a significant portion of the

community (Putnam, 2000; Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016). The examination revealed how the

decay of social capital contributed to the eradication of approximately 48 percent of the Meacham

Park community by Kirkwood officials (Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015; Sutin, 2000). Also, the

level of social capital that existed was limited by controls that prevented significant social,

political and economic mobility of Meacham Park residents in ways that would enable the

sustainability of the community.

<u>Annexation Within the Social Construct</u>

The implications of race were, and continues to be, an integral part of the social reality

that existed in Meacham Park leading up to the 1992 annexation. This social reality was most

prevalent in race-based policies relating to education, economic and social issues. The

examination revealed that within the social context of the Meacham Park community, Interest

Convergence was prevalent within the construct of Critical Race Theory. Wherein, policies were

enacted without the consideration of racial implications but instead when Kirkwood had

something to gain, not because it was in the best interest of the Meacham Park Community and

its' residents (Taylor, 1998 & Yosso, 2005). Interest Convergence placed "social capital at war

with equity and equality" (Putnam, 2000, p. 358). As illustrated in Appendix C, when race

interacts with public policy, the outcomes can be either beneficial or detrimental to Black

community sustainability. The examination supported the theory illustrated in Appendix C, that in the stratified community of Kirkwood, Interest Convergence was the road most travelled and led to the destabilization of the Meacham Park community.

The examination suggest that Kirkwood had no interest in affording basic amenities such as education, water, and protection to Meacham Park residents until Kirkwood politicians and its community had something to gain – in most cases Meacham Park had an economic or social price to pay. For example, after decades of protesting from the Meacham Park community, sewer lines were not put into the community until 1971, using a grant from the county housing development (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977). This action by Kirkwood was part of a plan to build the infrastructure needed for the future annexations of Meacham Park, a plan that was revealed a year later in Kirkwood's 1972 Annexation Plan. The sewer development benefited Kirkwood more than Meacham Park, because the residents of Meacham Park had to secure loans, organized by Kirkwood officials, to actually connect the sewer lines to their homes (Speer, 1998).

Also, another social construct involved Kirkwood's refusal to fully comply until it was to their benefit was the Brown v Board of education court decision requiring the desegregation of public schools. The construction of J. Milton Turner School was bore out of resistance by the Kirkwood School District to integrate. The Brown v Board of education decision was passed down in 1954, and Kirkwood was still grappling with how to desegregate its school district two decades later. It was not until February 18, 1975, when the Kirkwood school district identified the financial benefit desegregation afforded, that the Kirkwood school board adopted a desegregation plan that eliminated racial isolation of the district school system (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977). This plan also mandated the closure of J. Milton Turner School that was attended by Black students living in Meacham Park. After Kirkwood reneged on using "Turner as the neighborhood community service facility" (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977, p. 7) this action continued to negatively impact Meacham Park's ability to sustain significant levels of social capital relating to economic security and welfare as well as confidence in government.

Thus, the social reality of Meacham Park was the result of the Kirkwood community

employment of its own social capital that was void of the racial equity needed to sustain the

Meacham Park community (Putnam, 2000 & Yosso, 2005). Instead Kirkwood enacted policies

that destabilized the Meacham Park community in ways that thwarted its ability to build a

sufficient level of social capital that would enable significant influence on policy decisions.

<u>Influence of Bridging and Bonding Social Capital</u>

The examination of Putnam's theory that community activism has an influence on

community sustainability was also viewed from the lens of bridging and bonding social capital.

Bonding and bridging social capital were examined to distinguish the typology of community

engagement and activism that occurred in Meacham Park leading up to the 1992 annexation.

This is an essential component of Putnam's theoretical framework because the ideas distinguish

the ability of people in getting by, from getting ahead – bonding versus bridging social capital,

respectfully. Understanding the impact bonding and bridging social capital had on what has

disappeared and what remains of the Meacham Park community was essential in the examination

of community sustainability (Putnam, 2000).

The examination of the 1992 annexation process revealed a systematic approach, plagued

by misinformation, inequities, biases, inaccessibility, racism and unethical practices. The

examination showed some evidence that the fundamental principles of Robert Putnam's social

capital theory, relating to bonding and bridging social capital, could be used to better understand

this phenomenon (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002). Table 5 is a summary of the

existence of bridging and bonding social capital and its impact on the level of community

sustainability in the Meacham Park community.

Table 5: The Influence of Bonding and Bridging Social Capital
on the 1992 Annexation of the Meacham Park Community

Bridging Social Capital		
	-	+
Bonding Social **-**	The wealthy affluent community of Kirkwood exerted their power to solve problems that existed in Meacham Park in a	The Meacham Park community underwent drastic social and economic changes as a result of the 1957, 1968 and 1992

		manner they saw fit. Although, Meacham Park residents voted for the 1992 Annexation, they were not part of developing the proposal that eradicated 55-60 of the remaining 158 acres of their community. Also, many voted in favor of annexation because they felt they were left with no options. Influence: The annexation weakened the ability of residents to establish a sufficient level of social capital that could have had a positive impact on social capital indicators. Specifically, interpersonal relationships; economic stability and welfare; and trust in government were negatively impacted as a result of the 1992 annexation.	annexations perpetrated by the more powerful Kirkwood politicians. While the Meacham Park Improvement Association has a link to Kirkwood politicians, it does not have the support of its residents or the power to enact change. The motto of this organization is "Better Together" which promotes the idea that Meacham Park is not seen as something separate from the Kirkwood community. Influence: These annexations led to distrust of the Kirkwood politicians and a decline in the economic security of the Meacham park residents and community.
	+	Infighting between those opposed and those for the 1992 annexation, negated the Meacham Park community change efforts. High civic engagement and interpersonal trust had been eroded by the tactics of Kirkwood politics. Influence: While bonding social was strong among segments of the community – those for and those against the annexation, bridging social capital within the community continued to be limited by the politics of the 1992 annexation. Specifically, related to civic engagement, interpersonal relationships and government trust.	The community-based organizations – Meacham Park Improvement Association – represent the strongest connection between residents and Kirkwood community leaders. The change that was petitioned by residents in the Meacham Park community historically fell on the deaf ears of Kirkwood politicians Influence: It is through this organization that formed a stronger relationship between Kirkwood officials and a segment of the Meacham Park community. Specifically, there is a significant level of bonding social capital that exist within the organization that as resulted in the members' ability to get by and in some instances get ahead.

Source: An examination of Putnam, 1998 and 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002; and the 2010 Mediation Agreement provided an explanation as to how bridging and bonding influenced the level of social capital that existed in Meacham Park leading up the 1992 Annexation by Kirkwood.

The bonding social capital in the Meacham Park community consist exclusively of homogeneous social networks. These social networks are bonded with social structures such as churches, clubs and organizations that helped residents get by, wherein bridging social capital can be linked primarily to the Neighborhood Association that have limited ability to help the community get ahead (Putman, 2000; Farrell, 2007). Based on the examination of the Meacham Park community during the decade leading up to the 1992 annexation wherein the residents had few options; infighting among residents; and changes in the community was led by external entities the level of social capital had significantly eroded. Within this social reality, a plausible

argument can be made that the existence of isolated instances of bridging and ubiquitous existence of bonding social capital significantly influenced the varying levels of community sustainability. The levels that has manifested in the Meacham Park community (Putnam, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002) can be linked to the types of relationships that developed between community residents and Kirkwood City officials. Individualized connections to outside entities will not build the level of social capital needed to advance community interests (Casey & Christ, 2005) it is the collective actions that brings about change (Putnam 1993, 2000). The examination revealed the political, economic and social structure of a self-contained community that lacked the ability to acquire a sufficient level of bridging and bonding social capital in ways that could enabled sustainability (Putnam, 1998, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002).

This phenomenon was the result of Kirkwood officials who: (1) developed and implemented covert plans that benefited those in power; (2) eliminated wealth held by the Meacham Park community and individuals; (3) divided and isolated residents on critical issues; and (4) silenced voices of opposition and those unwilling to conform to the legal maneuvers and tactics. Since the community was grappling with this onslaught, the once well-connected community had become ill-equipped to engage in civic discourse related to the issue, because the level of social capital had been eroded by Kirkwood politics and politicians.

The Effect of Cookie and Kevin on Bonding and Bridging

The two significant events that revealed the existence of racial tension in the Meacham Park-Kirkwood communities were the death of Charles "Cookie" Thornton and the imprisonment and imminent execution of Kevin Johnson. Although the Cookie and Kevin incidents happened well after the 1991 vote to annex the Meacham Park community, they are included in the examination because they were indicators of the pulse of the Meacham Park community leading up to the 1992 annexation. The examination revealed a fragmented community caused by the politics of the 1992 annexation, the diminished level and nature of social capital was unable to ward off the tragedies involving Thornton and Johnson (Putnam, 2000; Randall, 2016; Boyles,

2015). The examination of the incidents involving Charles "Cookie" Thornton and Kevin

Johnson, while Meacham Park residents did not exculpate their actions, they believed both men

were provoked (Boyles, 2015, Kohler, 2008; Participants Roger and Brad, 2018). The tactics of

criminalizing individual behaviors and disenfranchising the community had consequences –

unfortunately death and incarceration are predictive outcomes (Boyles, 2015).

       Cookie was criminalized and fined $18,450 for parking violations involving his

commercial trucks; incorrectly hanging business signs; and failure to show correct work permits

(Boyles 2015). It was reported by respondent Brad that the City of Kirkwood towed Thornton's

commercial trucks and sold them for a fraction of its worth. Jim Hollinshead, a white friend of

Cookie's, stated in a 2008 St. Louis Post-Dispatch article, "Cookie absolutely was a victim of

racism" (Kohler, 2008, line 8). The anger in Cookie built up over years over tickets and fines

until he felt helpless and on February 7, 2008 he finally lashed out (Kohler, 2008). In the case of

Johnson, the Missouri Court of Appeals document stated, "Attempts to restart Bam-Bam's heart,

Johnson's younger brother, using CPR were unsuccessful. He was transported to the hospital

where he was pronounced dead."   The document continues, Sgt. McEntee and Officer Nelson

saw Kevin in the window, "they both looked up and they just started smiling" then got in their

cars and left. Following this incident, Kevin approached Sgt McEntee on the passenger window

of his police car. The transcript continues, "Kevin flipped out, and said, "you killed my brother,"

referring to the fact that when the police entered the residence looking for Kevin, Bam-Bam

suffered a heart attack and the police stepped over him to continue their search of the resident

instead of calling for medical emergency assistance. Kevin "flipped out" and shot Sgt McEntee

seven times because he perceived McEntee's actions during the search has indifferent to his

brother who was in need of help." (Boyles, 2015; Kohler, 2008; Participants Brad and Wil, 2018).

During Brad's interview, who was very close to Kevin and present every day during his murder

trial, began to cry as he stated, "They [the police] were looking for him and I knew they were

going to kill him if he was in the house." They did not like his family, because if you pushed

them, they were going to push back. As reported by Kohler in a 2008 Post-Dispatch article, the

shooters, Thornton and Johnson, insisted that being disrespected by city officials, hassled by the

police, and treated like second-class citizens led to the continuous decline in the community

(Kohler, 2008).

Impact of Policy Decisions

The varying types in approaches to activism were examined through the impact indicators

of Putnam's social capital theory – social networks, norms, social trust, and engagement. In

seeking to understand the impact the transformation of the Meacham Park community had on

sustainability – relative to geographic, social, political and economic change. The qualitative data

that was collected via interviews; videos/photographs and published documents analysis

supported components of Putnam's theoretical framework. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 summarizes the

influence that varying forms of social capital had on policy decisions leading up to and following

the 1992 annexation of the Meacham Park community by Kirkwood officials.

Table 6.1: The Influence of Social Capital on Policy Decisions
Pre-Policy relating to the 1992 Meacham Park Annexation

Policy Decision	Entities	
	Policy Impact Summary	Meacham Park's Social Capital Influence
1957 and 1968 Annexations	Used exclusionary tactics and misinformation to take control of land in the community. The property was not purchased from Meacham Park it was taken through political tactics such as annexation and eminent domain. The policies expanded Kirkwood boundaries and ownership of commercial property substantially increasing its tax revenue base.	During the 1957 annexation the community was caught off guard and unable to formulate action. The 1968 annexation was met with strong opposition by the community in the form of petitions and attendance at council meetings related to the annexation.
1971 Sewer Construction	The project was funded by a grant from the county housing development agency. The funds were used to develop a sewer system in Meacham Park - in April 1971 the final links to the sewer lines were connected.	After decades of petitioning by Meacham Park residents and community organizations the sewer lines were constructed. However, residents had to secure loans, organized by Kirkwood officials, to connect the sewer lines to their home.

Policy Decision	Entities	
	Policy Impact Summary	Meacham Park's Social Capital Influence
Meacham Park '76	A redevelopment spearheaded by St. Louis County that consisted of paving/repairing roads and demolishing dilapidated and abandon homes in Meacham Park. By September 1976, most residents were connected to the sewer line; storm water sewers installed; and a 50-low income housing development was under construction.	The progress of redevelopment has complicated the lives of the Meacham Park residents. They feared this redevelopment project is a precursor to Kirkwood annexing their community. But Kirkwood had taken no action, so neither did Meacham Park residents. An ad hoc committee with residents of both communities was appointed to look into the advantages of annexation and to make a recommendation on whether an annexation election should be held (Wallace 1977).
Desco Group Commissioned by Kirkwood in 1977 (Team Four, Inc)	In 1977, Kirkwood officials commissioned the Desco Group to assess Meacham Park's potential for annexation.	Nearly 100 Kirkwood and Meacham Park residents crowded into the first forum regarding the annexation report prepared by the consultant firm, Team Four, Inc. Previous difficulties between the two areas were the primary concern of the older residents of Meacham Park (Wallace, 1977).

Source: St. Louis Post Dispatch articles from Wallace and Sutin; 2010 Mediation Agreement; & Boyles, 2015.

Surrounded by the affluent communities of Sunset Hills, DePeres, Ladue, Webster Groves and Crestwood, Meacham Park remains in the crosshairs of these communities set on extending their borders. The Quinette Cemetery is one of two Black settlements remaining in the Kirkwood region (Boyles, 2015), the other being the Meacham Park community.

6.2: The Influence of Social Capital on Policy Decisions
Post-Policy relating to the 1992 Meacham Park Annexation

Policy Decision	Entities	
	Policy Impact Summary	Meacham Park's Social Capital Influence
1992 Meacham Park Annexation	In 1991, a vote to annex Meacham Park was placed on the ballot. Kirkwood Commons construction began in 1996	The strong sense of community that "characterized community was shaken badly" by the annexation issue. "Joe, a resident since 1926 and supporter of annexation, said that many older residents favoring annexation had been threatened" (Wallace 1977).

	Entities	
Policy Decision	Policy Impact Summary	Meacham Park's Social Capital Influence
1992 Establishment of The Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association	The Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association's stated mission is the help improve the quality of life in the community. There mode of operation is to build community by fostering civic involvement by "sharing information, connecting neighbors, promoting activities in our diverse community. "Source: http://www.meachamparknia.org/	An observation of this organization's meeting revealed that there is a disconnect between those in attendance and the Meacham Park community. It was well attended by Kirkwood residents including the Mayor, and those directly associated with the association. But there was an absence of Meacham Park voices that are still in opposition to the annexation. Lack of representation other than those members who are leaders in the association.
Opus Corporation	Kirkwood was interested in the potential tax revenue from the redevelopment plan its City Council supported Opus. However, they were up against the divided Meacham Park community and they failed to gain needed support. The Opus plan would have demolished much if not all of Meacham Park (Post-Dispatch editorial, Sutin, 1996).	In April 1995, the deal collapsed amid opposition from Meacham Park residents. Consequently, Opus Corporation withdrew its plan to develop a shopping center in Meacham Park after negotiations became hostile and some residents accused the company of racism (Sutin,1996).
DESCO	On October 7, 1999 the DESCO broke ground and began the construction of Kirkwood Commons.	Meacham Park hired Paul Ferber to represent their interest. Ferber began to collect property options and gave DESCO about 40 options which they accepted (Sutin 1999).
The 2010 Community Mediation Team and Agreement (Dec '08-Apr '09)	After the February 7, 2008 Thornton incident, this agreement was mandated by the federal government to assist the community in "resolving disputes, disagreements or difficulties related to conflicts and tensions based on race, and color." Source: 2010 Mediation Agreement	The members of this committee consist of a City Team (Kirkwood administration and elected officials) and Kirkwood Community Team (members not described). Collective action relating to Meacham Park issues are address from an individual subservient role.

Source: St. Louis Post Dispatch articles from Wallace and Sutin; 2010 Mediation Agreement; & Boyles, 2015.

The social capital that existed in the Meacham Park community began to erode in a two-decade long period prior to the 1992 annexation. "There exists a history of racial tension between the two communities, inflamed most recently by the shooting deaths of Kirkwood city officials and officers in two separate incidents, in which both of the shooters (Kevin Johnson and Charles "Cookie" Thornton) were Black men from Meacham Park." (Boyles, 2015, p. 13).

Civic Engagement/Action

The community had a history of petitioning St. Louis County and Kirkwood for access to basic amenities – education, water, sewer, in-door plumbing, and health facilities – the activism took effect several decades later or not at all (Speer, 1998; Boyles, 2015; Ezell, 2008). By the 1950s, Meacham Park residents were socially associated with organizations such as the Legionnaires; the Republican Club; and Women's Community Club. The most prolific organization was the Meacham Park Improvement Association, which was organized and active by the 1950s. This community organization lobbied for amenities such as sewage, lighting and water, (Randall, 2016; Speer et al., 1998). The argument was that the Meacham Park community lacked many of the basic services provided to surrounding communities. It was not until the 1960s, when sewer lines and paved roads were constructed, and abandoned housing were demolished (Wright, 2004). Community activism that begin in the early 1900's, lasted for almost fifty years, to address the inequity in education for Black children; access to basic amenities; and economic opportunities. The Table 7 below is a summary of community organizations that used their social capital to make change and foster community sustainability leading up to the 1992 annexation.

Table 7: Community Organization and Summary of Activism

Organization	Founded	Activism	Capacity
Club 44	1951	Founded by Joe Cole neighborhood clean-up during the 1960s	Young men in the community

Organization	Founded	Activism	Capacity
Meacham Park Improvement Association	1955	A forum for sharing information, connecting neighbors, promoting activities, and fostering civic involvement in our diverse community.	Meacham Park and Kirkwood Members
Sponsors Organization (SPROG), Inc	1968	Founded by William Jones, this organization was designed to help troubled youth between the ages of 15 and 20. By providing counseling and guidance and attend activities.	Staff of financial officer and aides
The Opinion - Meacham Park Community Newspaper	1968	The paper was labeled as militant because of its depiction of a Black Jesus and Santa Claus on the cover. The publication was intended to give voice to the Meacham Park community.	Circulation of 2500 in the City and County
Crown Royals	1975	Social club; and daycare center and food for senior citizens during the holidays	40 members

Source: St. Louis Disappearing Black Communities, Wright 2004; History of Meacham Park: 1892 – 1989, Speer 1998.

Also, reviewing the history of previous annexations perpetrated by Kirkwood officials in their quest to expand their boundary and eradicate a community believed to be a detriment to the more affluent surrounding communities the strategic system was revealed (Boyles, 2018; Randall, 2016). While observing the Meacham Park Community Parade, it was revealed that the boundaries of the parade route are restricted to the new boundaries defined by the 1992 annexation. The parade route no longer encompasses any streets outside of the Meacham Park subdivision and ends at Meacham Memorial Park, a 1.25-acre site located in the 300 block of Attucks listed as New York Street on the original plat. This neighborhood park is one of the few commitments made and honored by the Kirkwood government as part of the 1992 annexation – it is located in the heart of the Meacham Park area is one of the most heavily used parks in the Kirkwood park system. The amenities include a pavilion, restrooms, basketball court, spray fountain, playground, accessible walking paths" (Retrieved on June 6, 2018 from website http://www.kirkwoodmo.org/content/City-Departments/1833/meacham-memorial-park.aspx).

Culminating Impact on Social Capital: Meacham Park after the 1992 Annexation

To determine the influence social capital – collective activism – had on policy decisions that resulted in the varying levels of sustainability in the Meacham Park Community after the 1992 annexation required the examination of culminating events. Examining the previous levels led to a better understanding of what and how the constructs of social capital influenced policy decisions. According to the data in Table 9 below, the eroding social capital of the Meacham Park community was exacerbated by the politics leading up to the 1992 annexation by Kirkwood. The data shows there was a decline in the ability of the community to establish a continuous and sufficient level of collective activism needed to sustain Meacham Park at the pre-1992 levels.

Table 9: Influence of Social Capital by Indicator and
Link to Community Sustainability

Indicator	Summary of Activism	Impact on Social Capital	
		Bonding	Bridging
Civic Engagement	The community organizations that exist in Meacham Park leading up to the 1992 were community based. Their action related to how to improve the community through social and charity actions within the neighborhood - such as advocating for providing clothes, road repair, sewer construction, food, swim lessons, and scholarships for the residents.	Getting by	Getting Ahead
Interpersonal Trust	The trust that once existed among the residents of the Meacham Park community stemmed from the commitment people had for each other. This level of trust was key to years of sustainability, but the annexations eroded the trust within the community – it pitted neighbors against neighbors.	Getting by	
Confident in Government	Because of past experiences relating to Kirkwood politicians, the residents of Meacham Park did not have confidence in government officials, including police.	Getting by	
Economic Security and Welfare	There is evidence that Meacham Park residents were promised economic opportunities that did not come to fruition – job opportunities and redevelopment contracts. Also, the annexations eliminated	Getting by	

		Impact on Social Capital	
Indicator	Summary of Activism	Bonding	Bridging
	the wealth of Meacham Park residents – and home ownership		

Source: Putnam 2000 and 1993 provided evidence relating to the type of social capital community activism had on social capital.

The social capital relating to civic engagement declined when original homeowners were forced out of the community amid redevelopment efforts by surrounding affluent communities. The contributing factor in this decline was the displacement of original residents that were committed to the well-being of the community. These longtime homeowners were replaced by home and apartment renters who did not have a vested interest in the community (Boyles, 2015; Participants Roger, Carol, Brad, 2018). This led to division and lack of social connectiveness between the original and newcomers in ways that limited collective action within the newly formed Meacham Park community. This eroded the element of trust, which is an essential component in maintaining the appropriate level of social capital needed to influence public policies in ways that ensure community sustainability (Putnam, 2000; Farrell, 2007; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002).

The sentiment that was repeated over and over was, "I grew up here, the people cared about each other." There was a sense that the process of annexing the Meacham Park community not only stripped its residents of personal connections, it also gutted the core of the community and its ability of sustainability – schools, churches, businesses and social centers were eradicated. Most participants expressed a sadness about their current condition when asked about the relationship between current Meacham Park residents and Kirkwood – the confidence they had in the institutions that now governed Meacham Park following the annexation. These sentiments contradicted the pre-annexation beliefs about how decisions were made that impacted the direction of the community. So, when participants were asked to describe the relationships among residents within the Meacham Park community, they attributed decisions made by outside entities as instrumental in eroding the connectivity among residents. Since, the density of the

social network normalizes reciprocity and encourages honesty among the residents within the

community (Putnam, 2000), annexation severed the ability of residents to maintain these

connections. The following tables summarize the responses to critical questions relating to

essential components of social capital that were examined in this study: civic engagement;

interpersonal trust; confidence in government; and economic security and welfare (Putnam 2000).

Table 8.1: Civic Engagement
Question 1: Describe when and how you or any one in your household
participated in any communal activities, where people worked for
the benefit of the community?

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
Wil	Initially the respondent was amused by the question and stated his family was not directly involved in community activities that was beneficial to the community. But as the interview progressed, he disclosed involvement in summer job opportunities afforded to him by a Meacham Park businessman [Charles "Cookie" Thornton) that employed young men who lived in the community. "I would go to school [college] and come home I would work with him doing asphalt construction work."
Roger	"I was a member of Club 44, I did a lot of work with Club 44, it was a means to an end. But it helped a lot of people, it helped a lot of seniors get things, but they helped the youth too. As a youth, I was able to help put up the flags in Kirkwood we did a little service job, but that's what it was. So as far as any other political, I didn't see the political aspect, I did see if Joe wanted something, he could go to McNary who was the County Chief executives in Saint Louis County. I know he could go to McNary and get things, but it was always a tradeoff you no. " "SPROG was [the idea of] a guy named Bill Jones who was the mailman out there, he started that program to help. It was called Juvenile Aid Program and that program I think definitely saved me." "There was another group, I guess you would call them political, it was called Brothers on the Block. Harry Jones was kind of the head leader of that, but it was Harry Jones, Michael Spears and Jerry Jones. Yeah, but there were a few older, well I mean there are my mom's age but yeah they were very interesting they helped me a lot growing up being a man." In reference to the Neighborhood Association: "it's not, for more individual people just trying to keep their property values. I don't think that that organization wanted to keep the community together, it's just more values on their property."
Brad	Well they have a lot of money for that organization (Neighborhood Association). We also have the Mothers of Meacham. That's an organization for the kids. They put on this past Christmas they gave oodles of bikes that they donated to the Moms of Meacham.

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
Carol	"It was coming through the store and my dad. They did camping trips, they found homes and housing for people. Where dad was, something called Jefferson Franklin Community Action they helped with electric bills, they helped with the food, they helped with clothing." "But I know Bill Jones and Dorothy Wallace had something to do with trying to get in sewers."
Patton	"This positivity showed at the 2019 fifth annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at KHS, a collaboration between MNIA, KSD and Kirkwood city government". Patton emphasized one phrase. "More coming together" (Peter, 2019). "Patton believes the city can change the rules on a whim" (Brown, 2008).
Written Documents	Some Meacham Park residents say they felt isolated from the rest of the city and others say the police were intimidating (Brown, 2008). "And one young resident of Meacham Park says that "the annexation is tearing our community apart." (Wallace, 1977). About 75 members of the Meacham Park Post-Annexation attend hearings to express their opposition to the annexation.
Visual Artifacts	 Pride In The Park 2016 Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association sponsors these two events on an annual basis. 2018 MNIA Scholars Source: Photos retrieved from http://www.meachamparknia.org/ on March 23, 2019

The five Participants of this examination believed that, prior to the politics of the 1992 annexation, Meacham Park had always been a close-knit self-sustaining community. Brad stated, "we shared out here in Meacham Park. A community that we all were in it together. I mean, everybody knew everybody who was out here."

The challenges in building social capital resides in the opposing views of those involved - Meacham Park residents feared that their "history will be lost," and Kirkwood officials believe

the "redevelopment will be Meacham Park's salvation" (Bannerman-Menson, 1994; Kee, 1999).

Government programs, like those proposed by Kirkwood, such as neighborhood clean-up, crime

prevention, and public housing projects, systematically eradicate social networks from poor Black

communities, because it shreds the community of its social fabric (Putnam, 1993). Also, because

it is the collective thought that formulates social capital in community spaces such as the barber

shop, corner store, and churches that builds social networks. It was the social connections

established in these spaces that mobilized the Civil Rights Movement and significantly influenced

equity in government policy (Putnam, 1993; Bryson & Mowbray, 2005; Lang, 2008). It was the

eradication of these spaces from the Meacham Park community that influenced the decline of

social capital.

<u>Interpersonal Trust</u>

According to Putnam, "economist have found, other things being equal, that trusting

communities have a measurable economic advantage" (Putnam, 2000, p. 135). Therefore, an

examination of the level of interpersonal trust provided insight into a critical indicator in

measuring social capital in the Meacham Park community. Interpersonal trust is strongly

associated with civic engagement, meaning people who trust their neighbors more often

volunteer, contribute to charity; participate in politics; members of community organizations;

serve on juries, and fulfill taxes obligations (Putnam, 1993, 2000). Interpersonal trust is also

strongly associated with reciprocity – a characteristic that was exhibited among Meacham Park

residents through the care and concern shown regarding the well-being of residents in the

community. Table 8.2 summarize participants' responses to the question relating to instances of

reciprocity – a strong indicator of the levels of interpersonal trust that existed within the

Meacham Park community prior to the 1992 annexation.

Table 8.2: Interpersonal Trust
Who were the people in your community that could be most trusted? Or not trusted?

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
Wil	"Everybody knew each other, because everybody knew each other's families, so it was pretty much cool. But if you were from the outside then came in, then you might have a bit of a problem. But, other than that, community wise we stuck together, we were cool because everybody knew each other."
Roger	"Everybody knew each other, the babysitters were next door. I mean we all knew each other our grandfather lived there, they lived there my mother, they grew up in Meacham right around the corner. I mean all the people knew each other."
	"I think, I hate to put it like this, but Meacham Park was like a Camelot. It was a neighborhood that happened one time, one time only. It was a neighborhood, I wanna say got along but we all coexisted. We all, we all helped each other we all did what we could do for each other. That's why I'm still involved in the homecoming and all that kinda stuff. I don't want it to disappear but unfortunately it pretty much is."
Brad	"That's the way it was out here in Meacham Park, if somebody had something you could get it. We shared out here in Meacham Park. A community that we all were in it together. Everybody could chastise any kid out here."
Carol	". . .because people had a tendency, my dad had a good heart, and if you came in and you said my husband got out of work and Thanksgiving is coming and I really ain't got no food in the house and blah blah blah blah blah. Now he supposed to have some money coming in December, he got job prospects coming in and if you could just let us have, we will get it back to you soon as he goes back to work. Daddy would say go get your cart and get you something to eat."
	"I can go to a friend's house and if I cut up and her momma could whoop me and send me home and tell my mama that I cut up in my mamma would whoop me, you know. Everybody looked out for everybody. If your momma saw me cutting up out in the street, she'd say Carol don't let me have to call your momma. There was a closeness, everybody was family."
Patton	This respondent provided no significant comments in public documents relating to this social capital indicator. Published record indicate that she opposed the 1992 annexation, while Cookie Thornton favored the annexation. This caused a divide in the community between the two camps (Sutin,1996).
Written Documents	"William Irving, community betterment coordinator, admitted that if an annexation election were held now, it probably would fail, in Kirkwood because of the financial burden and lingering racial prejudice of some individuals and in Meacham Park because of suspicion and mistrust bred of 60 years of neglect and exploitation by Kirkwood" (Wallace, 1977).

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
Visual Artifacts	"People in Meacham Park don't talk, she adds, because the Kirkwood City Hall holds the deeds to their homes, through the TIF contract that gave them upgrades" (Cooperman, 2008).
	The examination revealed visual artifacts of community events; photos of club members; and observations of committee interaction. It is through these observations that an inference can be made that interpersonal trust existed among community residents in varying forums (Speer, 1998).
	The video showed the physical attributes that confined the community and restricted the mobility the residents (Ezell, 2008)

In 1992, Meacham Park was annexed by Kirkwood in a 70% majority vote. This vote paved the way for the beginning of the redevelopment plan for a reported fifty-five to sixty of the remaining 135 acres for the construction of a shopping center called Kirkwood Commons (Randall, 2016; Shinkle, 2002). This caused a divide in the community between supporters of the annexation led by Cookie Thornton and opposition to the annexation led by Harriett Patton, leader of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association (Sutin, 1996).

Eugene Jones, pastor of Douglas Memorial Church of God in Christ witnessed the day by day renewal, as more than half of Meacham Park disappeared (Kee, 1999). Because of this development, many of the homes have been replaced with commercial developments and parking lots. Jones, a 43-year resident of the community, believes history will be lost, worrying that the construction project will be the demise of Meacham Park, wiping out its identity and further isolating the community (Kee, 1999; Participants, 2019).

Under the Meacham Park redevelopment plan, fifty-five of Meacham Park's 135 acres were gentrified – a few properties were taken in eminent domain and 80% of the 2000 residents moved out of the community. Contrary to the stated intent of the developers and Kirkwood official Rosalind Williams, the original residents of Meacham Park were lost amid the underlining purpose to squeeze low-income Black families out of the affluent community of Kirkwood (Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015). The insensitivity to Black culture, Williams states in

the 1999 Post-Dispatch article, "We're trying to make it [Meacham Park] like any other

neighborhood in Kirkwood" (Kee, 1999, p. 3).

The residents still living in the Meacham Park community feel isolated. They have been

hemmed in by I-44, several streets that went through Kirkwood Road have been closed, and new

development are springing up all around the remaining acres of Meacham Park, closing in the

existing residents. "The segregated J. Milton Turner School, named for a Missouri slave who

served in the Union Army, still stands, though it is now a private business" (Kee, 1999, p. 3). The

fear of the remaining residents is that developers will continue to gentrify the community until

Meacham Park disappears completely (Kee, 1999; Sutin,1996).

According to all five respondents, the community began to lose its connectivity when the

annexations of 1957 and 1968 carved out four plats and six and a half acres, respectively

(Randall, 2016). But, more severely impacting the social norms, structures and connections was

between 1960 and 1970, when the Meacham Park population declined from 2000 to 1200

(Randall, 2016). Also, it was believed by the four of the five Participants that the St. Louis

County housing development – known as Chocolate City – infused an element into the

community whose values were different from the original Meacham Park residents (Boyles,

2015). The fracture of the community was exacerbated by the politics leading up to the 1992

annexation of Meacham Park. Respondents and written documents showed evidence that the

politics frayed the community in ways that hindered their collective ability.

Economic Security and Welfare

Since the establishment of Meacham Park, its Black owned business structure helped to

sustain the community. "By the 1950s, Blacks owned and operated five grocery stores, five

beauty shops, two service stations, a cleaners, an auto repair service, a radio and television repair

shop, and a trash disposal service within the Meacham Park community" (Speer, 1998, p. 42;

Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016).

Although, there was a promise by Kirkwood that the development would provide jobs for Meacham Park residents, job opportunities that would provide economic growth and stability were not available to Meacham Park residents (Boyles, 2015). Meacham Park residents were only afforded access to low paying service jobs. This was evident in the argument made by Steve Beck the developer who purchased the J. Milton Turner school from the City of Kirkwood. Beck stated in an interview with Ezell, "The project will provide job opportunities for people in the [Meacham Park] community, jobs such as maintenance, snow removal, secretaries" (Ezell, 2008). The management job opportunities were not accessible to the Meacham Park residents because they did not know where and how to apply for these types of positions that existed as a result of Kirkwood Commons. These are just a few examples, others Kirkwood promises included, the redevelopment of J. Milton Turner School into a community center; and the award of construction contracts to Meacham Park resident. These are just a few examples of the many broken promises that led to the lack of confidence in Kirkwood by the Meacham Park residents and community.

What is most significant to this idea of social capital is the demographic change of the community. By the mid-1950s, of the more than 1300 residents less than 300 where white and by the mid-1960's only 13 white residents lived in Meacham Park (Randall, 2016). This enabled argument of blight to be perpetrated on the future of the community. This label of being a blighted community and years of county disinvestment took a toll on the community and made Meacham Park ripe for colonialization (Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016; Participants, 2018). It was also evident by articles written in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch which often propagated the annexation as a good faith effort on the part of Kirkwood to revitalize, renew, reorganize, and redevelop the Meacham Park community (Bower, 1991; Jackson & Smith, 1988; Bannerman-Menson, 1994; Sutin,1996; Kee, 1999).

Because of the annexations of 1957, 1968 and 1992, Meacham Park had lost a significant number of businesses and homes (Boyles, 2015), the residents of the Meacham Park community

were in a long-standing battle to sustain their community – many felt was under siege. The

interviews brought back memories of betrayal and how tangible possessions such as their homes

and businesses were taken in ways that jeopardize the economic security and personal welfare of

Meacham Park residents. The Table 8.3 below is a summary of the Participants' experiences

relating to the 1992 annexation and the impact it had on their lives.

Table 8.3: Economic Security and Welfare
When was the level of economic security in the community at its highest?

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
Wil	"It was poor." But, the value of the community was its accessibility. "Everywhere you come into Meacham Park, you could get to the highway, the highway was right there - we were in a great location." "They [Meacham Park] had their own grocery store, their own fire department, police officer, barber shops. They had a lot of stuff, their own stuff, they did not have to leave out of Meacham Park to do much, because they had their own stuff there [in the community]. When I came up, we had to go across to Ventures and K-Mart, so a most of that stuff was gone when I came along" in the mid-1980s.
Roger	"I think Meacham Park, you know as I get older, I realize that it was low income it was predominately poor single moms. But before then, there were full families that grew up in Meacham Park. We had a fire station, my great grandfather had a tailor shop, there was a cleaners it was a lot. My uncles had, great uncles, had a grocery store – there was a lot in the community but in the 60s it all went away." "Kirkwood annexed like the front half, front portion where all the businesses were in the 80s and they took like all the businesses by the 90s, a liquor store and the meat store. But all the businesses were taken during the first round [of the annexation in the '60s]."
Brad	"Well, when we grew up in Meacham Park, we were poor, we put the p in po. But we didn't know we were poor. Everybody lived basically the way we lived, eating syrup sandwiches, I didn't know we were poor. Until I look back on where we came from, we were as poor as Joe's Chicken." "They are just going to take bits and pieces and there ain't going to be nothing left. Because it ain't much left now, what you only got two ways in the back way and front way." "That's the way Kirkwood designed it, so if they are looking for somebody or want somebody, you ain't got a whole lot of ins and outs and they can swoop in on you and get you and take you on out of here."
Carol	"And then when they backed out, it was my understanding that they backed out because Kirkwood said that these people don't want to sell, we will take the land with eminent domain and they did not want to do that."

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
	"They cut the water off at the house, which cut the water off at the barbershop so there went his livelihood, because that's all he ever did. I think he did more because he felt like he lost everything, then really his physical situation. But anyway, Kirkwood was giving her a bunch of crap, they wanted to tear the buildings down." "It brings the family down; it takes a toll on them. When they took the land with eminent domain it wasn't too long after that my dad died."
Patton	"Meacham Park needs a jobs effort no matter the fate of the shopping center. You can't fix up your home if you don't have a job. It's OK to get a handout, but it would be better if people were self-sufficient" (Sutin,1996). "This plan would betray the promise by Kirkwood to keep Meacham Park residential. It will destroy Meacham Park" (Bannerman-Menson, 1994). "the conditions for building a new house made many residents of Meacham Park feel like second-rate citizens" (Peter, 2019).
Written Documents	"By the 1950s Meacham Park at five grocery stores, five beauty shops, two service stations, a cleaners, an auto repair service, a radio and TV shop, and trash disposal service" (Boyles, 2015). "Several residents signed deeds of trust when Kirkwood offered TIF funds under the Meacham Park Redevelopment program, meaning loans are forgiven after 5 years – depending on when the residents signed" (Brown, 2008, St. Louis Post-Dispatch).
Visual Artifacts	In Speer 1998 history of Meacham Park, illustration that show the existence of businesses such as barber shops, taverns, and restaurants.

Source: Participant interviews. 2018-19; St. Louis Post-Dispatch articles.

The annexations also cause physical damage to the Meacham Park community. The 1958 development caused storm water to saturate the basements, foundations, gardens and yards of many homes in Meacham Park. As a result, residents began to abandon or rent out their homes – unravelling the culture norms and destabilizing the community. The social connectiveness among the residents began to fray (Bjorkman, 2017; Boyles, 2015; Participants, 2018). Thus, those longtime residents were no longer a part of the community and were less likely to be able to participate and support grassroot community action and activism.

Confidence in Government

Although Meacham Park was part of St. Louis County, basic amenities were not afforded to the community. According to respondent Roger and Speer, Meacham Park had its own fire department at one point and because it was volunteer it didn't have the resources needed to adequately service the community. Also, according to respondent Roger, after a family of five or six children were burned up in a house fire," Kirkwood decided to serve as first responders and Meacham Park became part of the Kirkwood fire district in 1967.

The community's sovereignty continued to erode – economic and social deterioration took its toll (Gross, 1994). "Despite Black residents' reservation, annexation of Meacham Park by the City of Kirkwood passed with 83 percent vote of approval from Meacham Park and a 72 percent vote of approval from residents in Kirkwood." (Boyles, 2015, p. 66). Table 8.4 below is a summary of Participants comments relating to the level of confidence of Meacham Park residents in general and specifically relating to the 1992 annexation.

Table 8.4: Confidence in Government
How much confidence did you have in government institutions?

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
Wil	"Citizens were angry at the police. I was just mixed emotions. When it happened [killing of officer McEntee] in my spirit, it just made me want to walk straight. Because you did not know if you got pulled over, what was going to happen, if the police were going to retaliate, you didn't know." "It was just Meacham Park and Kirkwood, nobody cared about Meacham Park. If you were on the outside of Meacham Park, nobody cared about the people in Meacham Park."
Roger	"I think they were supposed to put in a swimming pool in Meacham Park, but that money got diverted to the skating rink in Kirkwood. How that worked out I don't know but that's what happened." "I think a lot of it was, I mean it was always us against them. Kirkwood was never really, I don't wanna say welcome, but I don't think Kirkwood ever really welcomed us, I mean we were the Black people who helped clean their houses and we were the day laborers and all that kinda stuff. But, were we never welcome, welcomed truly into Kirkwood after the annexation?" "I think Cookie, the whole thing with Cookie was, he was lied to. I think it was a disgrace, I mean but also dealing with probably mental illness and all that. But he, the whole thing was ridiculous. They, I think what happened was Kirkwood gave him an OK to do something they took it back and then tried to fine him.

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
	And that's why he went to court, he went all through all the process but if you grandfather something and then change your mind, it's gonna be a problem. And I think that's what happened I think he was promised that he could keep his equipment in that location, and they changed it, when the government changed the rules changed."
	"So, there were a lot of sponsors that helped SPROG. Mr. Jones was very political, but he did what he did to help the kids."
Brad	"I am going down to get some Drano to open my drain up. I pulled around the corner and here they come behind me, pulled all upside the car, pulled out their guns and told me to get on the ground. I said for what? "Did you just pull out of there." Yes, that's where I live." They (the Kirkwood police) searched Brad's car and did not find a weapon.
	"He had and asphalt business, demolition. So, they gave him (Charles "Cookie" Thornton) a couple of jobs to convince the people. And when they didn't need him anymore, they kicked him to the curb. When he went to protest and stuff like that, they locked down all his trucks and took them, auctioned them off."
	"The chief, I don't know that much about the new chief, but the old Chief he was a good man. He tried to treat people the right way. From what I could see, he was well liked in the community. So that tells you something right there, he was liked. But, this new one we got, I don't know."
Carol	"But they got a reason, the property value is down so they can come in and buy and swoop it up. I don't have a problem with moving but treat me right when you come through. For as a Black, everyone wants their kids to be in Kirkwood school district, because it is a great school district, but they don't favor Blacks."
	"The kid that just recently got killed, the kid was having all kinds of problems at home, they kicked him out of school for a little of nothing, so he is just out there the next thing you know he came up dead."
Patton	"Meacham Park is plagued by people interested in our land" (Sutin, 1996).
	"This plan would betray the promise by Kirkwood to keep Meacham residential. It will destroy Meacham Park" (Bannerman-Menson, 1994)
	After the Johnson incident, "some feared retribution or losing their homes if they did comply with the home-to-home search." (Brown, 2008, Brown et al., 2008).
	"The conditions for building a new house made many residents of Meacham Park feel like second-rate citizens." (Peter, 2019)
Written Documents	The distrust for the City of Kirkwood increased when the majority of Meacham Park's commercial areas was annexed by the city in 1957 to build a Venture store. (Bjorkman et al., 2017)

Respondent	Interview Responses and Document Analysis
Visual Artifacts	Without the input or consent of Meacham Park, an annexation study was commissioned by St. Louis County and Kirkwood in 1977 (Bjorkman et al., 2017). Connie Karr was the only City Council member in Kirkwood who served as a voice for Meacham Park, but her name was removed from the ballot by the Kirkwood council. (Brown, 2008). "After several false starts, a plan by Jim Matush to turn the old school into a community and youth center gained approval in the fall of 2000, and renovation planning is currently underway" (National Register of Historic Places, 2002). Kirkwood sold the property to an investment company in 1980 and developer Steve Beck began renovations in 2008. The new narrative became, "With some help from Kirkwood, the school will reopen with offices and spaces the community can use" (Ezell, 2008). Meacham Park residences do not have access to designated space within the school (Boyles, 2015; Participants, 2019) This image below is a still shot of police surveillance in the Meacham Park community. This is narrated by the police officer in the video, who makes an inference that this group young Blacks are selling drugs out in the open. Sources: Retrieved from website https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7AAb7SUozI on March 28, 2918.

Source: Participant Interviews, 2018-19

Of the five participants, four cited Charles "Cookie" Thornton as the catalyst that bridged the divide between Kirkwood officials and Meacham Park residents that resulted in the approval of the annexation (Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016; Participants, 2018). But, regardless of the overwhelming support of the 1992 annexation by Meacham Park residents, there was a fear among residents of another round of property seizures through eminent domain. Residents who refused to sell and misinformation regarding buyouts/payouts of their property caused distrust of Kirkwood officials (Boyles, 2015; Participants, 2018). Joe Cole, a longtime Meacham Park activist and founder of the Club 44 youth program, says the most important goal for the

community should be getting young people off the streets and into clubs and activities. "It's about giving young people something to do and something to hope for," Cole said, "A lot of these kids have nothing to do. What do you expect to happen?" (Frievogal et al., 2010). Another area of concern is the interaction between Meacham Park residents and the policing of the community.

Summary

The dissolution of the Meacham Park community began decades before the 1992 annexation. It was not until the civic actions and political tactics waged by the City of Kirkwood leading up to the 1992 annexation that rendered the community defenseless against its imminent demise. The 1958 annexation eliminated Meacham Park's financial tax revenue base and led to a dependency on Kirkwood for access to basic resources and protections – sewer, police, fire, and water. The development of Interstate-44 provided a critical selling point to potential investors relating to accessibility to new businesses that Kirkwood Commons would bring to a region that had been placed on the development radar. This examination did not reveal an existing plan linking the Interstate-44 development to a contingency for the Kirkwood Commons development, but all five participants believe the reason for the highway development was part of the deal. Also, a 1966 Post-Dispatch article, entitled Kirkwood Act to Improve Services in Meacham Park, supports this idea that improving conditions within Meacham Park was a preliminary step toward annexation of the community.

It was the two previous annexations in 1957 and 1968 that altered the social structure of the Meacham Park community. These phenomena altered the dynamics of community relationships and trust – components identified by Putnam's theory as key elements in community sustainability (Putnam, 2000). The actions by Kirkwood, constrained the collective voices of the residents by extracting the leadership and the originals from the community - severing relationships among residents; diminished interpersonal trust through divide and conquer tactics, placing wedges between residents of this once homogeneous community; and eradicating the community's business sector, the primary source of its tax revenue – through eminent domain and

questionable buyouts. According to the social capital theory, these actions by Kirkwood politicians were contributing factors that enable the 1992 annexation by the City of Kirkwood (Putnam, 1998, 2000).

The 1992 annexation, unlike those before it, introduced a different community character and tone. The once close-knit community was now at odds about its direction – the introduction of self-interest and self-preservation caused divisiveness within the community. The 1992 annexation caused conflict between those for, and those against, Kirkwood's plan to take over Meacham Park. Those against annexation, led by Harriett Patton and those for the annexation, led by Charles "Cookie" Thornton were now in opposition. This conflict limited the ability of residents to form the collective action needed to act in the best interest of the whole Meacham Park community (Putnam, 1998, 2000; Boyles, 2015). The collective action of Patton's followers was influenced by an individual interest to preserve property values and Thornton's collective action was influenced by an individual interest to gain access to economic opportunities.

All five Participants expressed a distrust for the government of Kirkwood as evident by their statements. Brad stated, "They [Kirkwood] are making big money up there on the property they took." Roger stated, "I don't think the houses were valued for what they were worth. A lot of people didn't know, and they got very little money." In a 1994 St. Louis Post-Dispatch article written by Bannerman-Menson, Spears states, "the commission cares about Meacham Park only for its development value."

The fear of the residents is that "the rich history and community pride that once existed in the Meacham Park community has been reduced to Black street names, an annual homecoming celebration, a neighborhood association, a remodeled elementary school inaccessible to the neighborhood, an exaggerated reputation of crime and lawlessness and years of distrust and racial contention with its local government." (Boyles, 2015, pp. 54-55; Randall, 2016; Participants, 2018). As Roger stated in the interview, "I don't want it to disappear but unfortunately it pretty much is." Through an any means necessary approach, disenfranchisement, destabilization, and

dismantling set the stage on which land grabs, and business takeovers had rendered collective activism ineffective (Boyles,2015; Randall, 2016), leaving the Meacham Park community vulnerable to the more affluent Kirkwood. The narrative that had been set into motion was the community needed to be saved from rising crime and poverty (Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016) solidified Meacham Park's vulnerable to Kirkwood's redevelopment plan.

During these pre-interview conversations with Meacham Park residents, they often began with a consistent account of the trust among the people within the community; how Meacham Park residents were treated by Kirkwood officials and police; and how community businesses and homes were taken through the1968 eminent domain and the 1992 annexation. For the most part, they wanted to share how the community of Meacham Park was prior to the 1992 annexation and the impact the annexation continues to have on the physical and social conditions of this newly formed sub-division of Kirkwood, the previously unincorporated community of Meacham Park. The examination revealed a systematic approach to dismantling, disenfranchising and destabilizing the Meacham Park community structure.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY

Overview

The purpose of the study was to examine the varying levels of community sustainability that exist in the Meacham Park community. Meacham Park was chosen because approximately 51% of the community still exist, while 49% has disappeared. Disappeared, meaning an external phenomenon caused the physical structures that sustained its history, culture, and ideals prior to the 1990s to no longer exist (Wright, 2005; Boyles, 2015). Thus, this phenomenon provided a unique opportunity to examine the plausibility of Putnam's social capital theory – within the dichotomy – relative to current levels of community sustainability that exist in Meacham Park.

Putnam's social capital theory is founded on the belief that socialization and fellowship among individuals and families generate the social potential that is enough to substantially improve the living conditions of the whole community (Putnam, 2000). During periods of economic and demographic change, efforts to understand, measure and identify ways to provide generalizable analytical tools that can strengthen social capital (Noy, 2008). "The study of social movements and collective action has long required social scientist to pay attention to issues of cooperation, social cohesion, and conflict." (Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002, p. 108). This knowledge can then be used by communities to effectively take strategic action to improve their circumstances (Putnam, 2000; Chazdon et al., 2013).

Conclusion

What was revealed in this examination is the 1992 annexation of Meacham Park did not happen in isolation but manifested over decades of political actions and public policies enacted by the City of Kirkwood despite opposition by Meacham Park residents. It was the decades long siege upon a community ill-equipped and unknowledgeable about how to respond to the colonization of their community (Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015; Participants, 2018). The decisions that led to the geographic and social dissolution that currently exist in the Meacham Park community were propagated by actions that began as early as the 1950s. The 1992 annexation

was crafted by several previous decades of court rulings, property takeovers, propaganda campaigns and resident displacements (Putnam, 2000; Randall, 2016; Boyles, 2015; Participants, 2018). The examination revealed that several decades of policy decisions transformed the community from what it was prior to the 1992 annexation, a close-knit community with high levels of bonding social capital, to what it is currently, a fragmented community under siege and on edge about its' future.

The examination shows that Kirkwood politicians infused the Meacham Park community with policies that over time had a corrosive impact on the community's ability to sustain a sufficient level of social capital that could significantly impact policies that enabled the 1992 annexation. Diagram 1, illustrates the influence Meacham Park's varying levels of social capital had on policy decisions leading up to the 1992 annexation by Kirkwood. The closure of J. Milton Turner school; development of a 50-unit low income housing complex; and the narrative of a blighted community all contributed to a significant decline in Meacham Park's level of social capital (Chapple & Zuk, 2016). The examination revealed that the 1970s was the period of time when Kirkwood imposed a barrage of policies that contributed to the continuous decline in Meacham Park's level of social capital.

Diagram 1: The Influence of Social Capital on Policy Decisions Timeline

The Influence of Social Capital on Public Policy

● Sufficient/Significant   Damaged   ● Waning/Limited   Insufficient /No
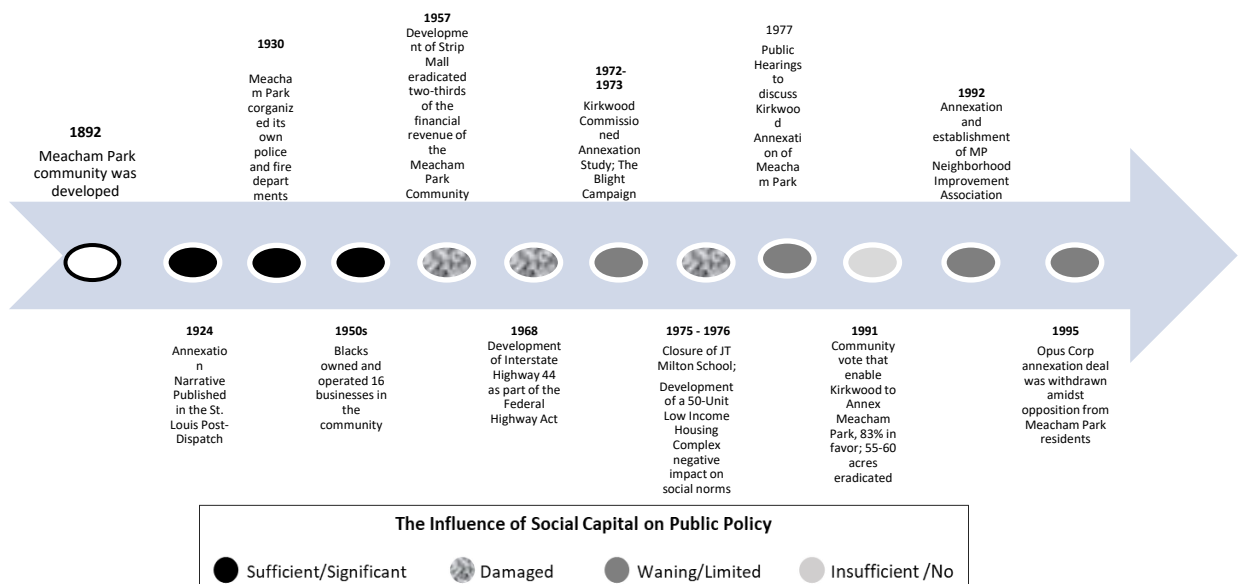
During the decade of the 70s, Kirkwood's enacted policies and employed tactics that caused severe damage to Meacham Park residents' ability to garner a sufficient level of social capital that could influence public policy. These policies and tactics included: (1) the initiation of a blight campaign in 1972, promoted by the media, to control the narrative and infuse the public with the notion that Meacham Park was unable to sustain itself financially and socially – thus needed to be rescued by Kirkwood; (2) a partnership with St. Louis County Housing that in 1976 implanted a 50-unit low income housing complex in the Meacham Park community that infused divisiveness in the once close knit community; (3) closed the J. Milton Turner School in 1975 eradicating community-based schooling – the economic and social hub of a stabilized community; and (4) in 1977 began aggressive actions through public hearings, town halls, forums, and council meetings to formalize the process of annexation. The chronology might have one to believe that these are isolated and unrelated sequence of events but collectively these actions are the tactics used to dismantle Black communities all over the United States (Chapple & Zuk, 2016). These actions by Kirkwood politicians in the 1970s laid the groundwork for the 1992 annexation of Meacham Park.

The primary focus of the examination revealed that the level of social capital that existed in Meacham Park prior to the 1990s had significantly eroded and led to the 1996 – 1999 social reality of the Meacham Park community (Speer, 1998; Boyles, 2015; Randall, 2016; Participants, 2018). The level of social capital had an insignificant impact on the policy decisions in ways that could thwart the 1992 annexation that affected the sustainability of the Meacham Park community. The systematic breakdown of political, economic, and social community structures caused a significant decline in social capital within Meacham Park by the time major policy decisions that led to the 1992 annexation were up for debate. During previous decades, Kirkwood politicians had enacted policies that eradicated the economic security; eroded trust in the government and severed interpersonal trust within the community organizations and among Meacham Park residents.

The triangulation of data helped to refine, extend and explain how these seemingly isolated actions and collective activism influenced the decision-making process that enabled the 1992 annexation of the Meacham Park community. The phenomenon of community sustainability in Meacham Park was impacted by the actions of Kirkwood officials who: (1) developed and implemented covert plans that benefited the affluent and powerful; (2) eliminated revenue entities held by the Meacham Park community and individual residents; (3) divided and isolated Meacham Park residents on critical issues; and (4) silenced voices of opposition and those not willing to comply, using legal maneuvers and tactics (Boyles, 2015; Wright, 2004; Randall, 2016; Participants, 2018). The examination revealed these strategies were used to eradicate approximately 49% of the Meacham Park community. In the case of Meacham Park, the decline in social capital was primarily caused by several occurrences to include property seizure through eminent domain and annexation of the community (Putnam, 2000, 1998; Randall, 2016).

The secondary foci of the study revealed that the four constructs of social capital that were examined, culminated to form the kinds of civic engagement that were most likely to foster economic growth or community effectiveness (Putnam, 1993) in this Black marginalized community varied in their impact. This study showed that insufficient and incohesive levels of social capital – relating to civic engagement, interpersonal trust, confident in government, economic security and welfare – contributed to the disappearance of almost half of the Meacham Park community (Putnam, 1998, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelair, 2002; Participants, 2018).

Prior to the 1950s, when social capital in the Meacham Park community functioned at a high level based on types and actions, the community and its residents experienced economic stability (Speer 1998, Randall 2018, and Participants 2018). Meaning, Blacks living in the community own homes and businesses and the presence of civic connections among the residents enabled sustainability. However, the eradication of the business district in 1957, had a significantly negative impact that began the erosion of key indicators relating to social capital – mainly interpersonal trust, economic stability and welfare and trust in the government. Also, the

argument can be made to substantiate the claim of an association between social capital and the sustainability of marginalized Black communities include: The current physical attributes of the Meacham Park community are the consequence of social, economic and political decisions from various entities prior to and directly related to the 1992 annexation.

Limitations

The conclusions that can be derived from this study are limited by the ability to extrapolate from existing resources and the plausible recollection of respondents relating to past life experiences and events while living in Meacham Park. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch was the most prolific written publication of historical content relating to the 1992 Annexation of the Meacham Park community. While most contained views of some residents in Meacham Park, many accounts were contradicted when examining publications and testimony not aligned to the point of view of the City of Kirkwood officials and politicians.

Recommendation for Future Research

The prosperity of a community requires the comprisable existence of certain social and cultural elements to ensure structures exist that will promote economic growth and sustainability. In the case of Meacham Park, local policies systematically stripped the community of their power when the rights of its residents came in direct conflict with decisions made by corporations and politicians that wanted to use the community space for financial gain (Community Rights, 2015; Randall, 2016, Boyles, 2015, Participants, 2018). There must be a system for increasing the ability of Black communities to identify gentrification and displacement indicators such as the campaign that leads to disenfranchisement, dismantling and destabilization of the community.

This examination revealed the residual effect of early warning signs of gentrification and redevelopment efforts are a high police presence; disinvestment of financial institution and local government; and a propaganda campaign aimed at devaluing the character of the community and its residents (Chapple & Zuk, 2016). This examination revealed the Meacham Park residents did not understand what was happening to them and what specific action was needed to halt the

seizure of their community. Future research can identify a cost-effective intervention that policymakers can use to deter or halt the progression of neighborhood change (Chapple & Zuk, 2016). The community became blindsided by tokens of gratitude and did not know how to react when plans were enacted that had severe consequences on the ability to sustain their community.

The community profile reveal several critical truths about the community that resulted from the 1992 annexation of Meacham Park: (1) Why some residents were reluctant to communicate their concerns about the politics that led to the annexation?; (2) Which residents were unable to understand why individual and collective action did not yield expected prosperity for the Meacham Park community?; and (3) How the established social and physical boundaries continue to isolate and confine the Meacham Park community and its residents? An examination that equips Black communities with effective strategies and a formalized process of how to respond to these questions in ways that lead to the enactment of public policies that hinder colonization of Black communities and the displacement of its residents. This formalized process should consist of a pro-active and reactive approach. The process should be strategic and capable in addressing the encroachment from outside entities whose actions have shown a pattern that leads to dismantling Black communities. Included in this formalized process should be response mechanism to address the early warning signs associated with imminent displacement, such as the community: is adjacent to higher-priced areas; has existing and/or renewed access to transportation systems – metro systems and highways; contains historic architecture; and consist of and/or development of large housing units. The invaded community should innately recognize these early warning signs and take action using pro-active and reactive norms from a predetermined toolkit, such as:

Pro-Active: Building the Foundations of Social Capital

- Formulate an organized functioning political structure – mayor, police, fire, council
- Develop and maintain a financial structure to include banking, investments and businesses
- Develop community-based educational systems, K – 12 community schooling

- Ensure community organizations have a formal leadership structure and strategies for increasing membership over-time
- Create an awareness of the community structure to external entities

Re-Active: Toolkit for Community Sustainability
- Utilize pre-determined strategies and resources in response to proposed changes that are influenced by outside entities – lawyers, politicians, financial, one-voice leadership, and media
- Employ strategies to address the early warning signs that are predictors to displacement

Finally, considering that Black marginalized communities are often invisible in the research process, being cognizant of the role CRT can help to enhance research methodologies and race-conscious policies (Horsford, 2014). The data from this examination can be used to formulate a more comprehensive strategic plan that will improve the social and economic circumstances of poor disenfranchised communities such as Meacham Park, Missouri, one of the few remaining Black communities in St. Louis county.

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Appendix A

INSTRUMENT

	CLARIFYING Who, What, When, Where? (Descriptive-Informational) Reflecting	PURPOSE/CONSEQUENCE Why? (Results-Rationale) Planning/Judgmental	LINKING So What? (Synthesis-Beliefs) Improvement
Background	Give a summary of your family structure, life stages, and the culture of Meacham Park during the time you and your family lived in the community.		
Civic Engagement *(7cdef, 8f)*	*(Bonding)* What groups, organizations, or associations did you or any members of your household belong? What were the most important reasons for becoming a member?	*(Bonding)* Why did you or members of your household join the group, organization, or association? What was the purpose of the group, organization, or association?	*(Bridging)* What do you believe was so important about being a member of the groups, organization, or association?
Civic Action (11abc, 11gh, 11kl)	*(Bonding)* While living in the community, describe when and how you or any one in your household participated in any communal activities, where people worked for the benefit of the community?	*(Bridging/Linking)* While growing up in your community, explain why (or why wasn't) civic engagement was important and/or practiced (or not practiced) in your community?	*(Bridging/Linking)* What happened has a result of the civic action? How did you and/or members of your family have the power to make important decisions that could change the course of your life?
Interpersonal Trust & Networks (7a)	*(Bonding)* Who were the people in your community that could be most trusted? Or not trusted?	*(Bonding/Bridging)* Why were these trusted relationships important to you personally and to the community in general?	*(Bonding)* What type of relationships were beneficial to community well-being? Why?
Confidence in Government (8a, 8e, 7j)	*(Bridging)* How much confidence did you have in government institutions?	*(Bridging)* What factors influenced your level of confidence?	*(Bridging)* In your opinion, did the honesty of local government improve, deteriorate, or stayed about the same?
Welfare & Economic Security (1, 2, 3, 4)	*(Bonding)* When was the level of economic security in the community at its highest? At its lowest? Who/What provided you with a sense of safety and security?	*(Bonding)* Explain how likely it was that some people in the community would come to the aid of a neighbor in crisis?	*(Bridging)* How did you or members of your family work with others to do something for the benefit of the community?

	CLARIFYING Who, What, When, Where? (Descriptive-Informational) Reflecting	PURPOSE/CONSEQUENCE Why? (Results-Rationale) Planning/Judgmental	LINKING So What? (Synthesis-Beliefs) Improvement
Summary	How would you summarize the most notable event that occurred in the Meacham Park community relating to any of these domains?		

Source: The instrument that will be used in this study is based on Putnam's Social Capital Survey (2000) developed by the Social Capital Initiative at the World Bank, the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT or SCAT). Bonding and bridging questions will be posed to collective data from various forms of social capital and used to assess the level of social capital that existed in Meacham Park during 1996 to 1999.

Appendix B

Conversations with the Community

Conversation #1: Three Generations in Meacham - Wil

During his interview, Wil was asked about the mobility of Kirkwood residents to which

he stated, "you feel confined and isolated from the rest of Kirkwood."   Another aspect is that the

multiple points of entrance/exist that enable Meacham Park residents to move unobstructed into

Kirkwood Proper has been reduced to a single entrance located off Big Bend onto Milwaukee

Avenue. This has resulted in further isolation and questionable tactics used by police officer to

promote community safety. While one way in and one way out is not a new phenomenon, but

when this entrance is arbitrarily monitored by police it establishes a form of intimidation that

leads to mistrust of government entities among Meacham Park residents. The mistrust of

government entities adversely impacts the ability of the individual and community to generate the

level of social capital needed to sustain one's community (Putnam, 2000).

Conversation #2: At the Community Event in the Park - Roger

On May 5, 2018, I meet and engage in a lengthy conversation with Roger about what had

occurred in Meacham Park over the last several decades. I also wanted his assistance in

identifying potential participants for the focus group relating to the study. Roy provided the

names of several former and current Meacham Park residents including Harriett a community

leader, and current resident of Meacham Park. As well as an introduction to several longtime

residents of the community, to include interview participants Brad and Carol.

This was an interview with Roger, having resided in Meacham Park for eighteen years

until 1986, he is still very active in the community. A leader in organizing what is considered the

premier social event, The Meacham Park Homecoming Parade and Picnic. This event was held

on the "first Saturday June 2, 2018 and as promoted by Roger to be highly attended, he stated "it

will be a lot of people there." He was right, residents, family, and friends continue to celebrate

the Meacham Park community. According to study participant Roger and Wil, the parade has

been a significant part of the community for decades and viewed as a significant part of

community identifications. However, due to annexation this event has been confined to the 1992

scaled down area of the Meacham park community and the route is now bound by the company

housed at Turner School, Kirkwood Commons and Highway 44 I arrived at the Meacham Park

Community Reunion Parade grounds at 10:13am. I believed the purpose of the parade was to

celebrate the graduating classes of schools located in Meacham Park.

Documents Analysis - Meacham Park:

A History 1882 – 1989 (Speer 1998)

- This document provided evidence of the existence of community organization; social
  centers; and businesses entities that were essential to the sustainability of the community.

The Recorder of Deeds: Land Plot Diagram Overtime

- Unfortunately, public record of the existence of Meacham Park is found in two books,
  and the original plat filed by Elzey Meacham on September 16, 1892 in St. Louis County
  record book. When making inquiries about the community, a reference to Kirkwood
  must be made in order to clarify its approximate location.

Appendix C

Community Sustainability within the Context of Social Justice Model:
Critical Race Theory v Interest Convergence Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT)
-Quality Schooling and Education
-Developing Internal Social Capital
-Community Interest
-Affirmative Actions
-Inclusion in policy decisions

Public Policy
-Education
-Economic
-Political
-Social

Intersectionality of
Race, Poverty and Access

Community Sustainability
-Improving without
displacement of people
-Human Focused Resources
(food, medical, housing)
-Revenues Sources
(business/political/social)
-Wealth and Investment Markets

Critical Race Influence

Community Aptitude & Capacity

Interest Convergence Influence

Interest Convergence Theory (ICT)
-Profit and Gains (Private/Public)
-Maintaining External Social Capital
-Self and Business Interest
-Exclusion from policy decisions

Community Destabilization
-Abject Generational Poverty
-Existing Population Decline or
Inflation
-Wealth Attainment Desert
-Investment Abandonment
-Redlining

Artifact D

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Articles
that Support the Propaganda Claims

The St. Post-Dispatch played a significant role in the shaping the public's thinking about

the 1992 annexation of Meacham Park by Kirkwood. The publication published countless

articles relating to the 1992 Annexation – many from the point of view of Kirkwood officials.

Of the fifteen articles reviewed, the majority provided a historical account of how the City of

Kirkwood planned and pursued the annexation of Meacham Park. The review of articles written

by St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporters that propagated the annexation message, by writing

specifically from the socio-political perspective of the City of Kirkwood. In the case of reporter

Gross, who writes in a 1994 article, "The starkly poor Black neighborhood of Meacham Park

joined mostly white prosperous Kirkwood one slow step at a time." By continuously conveying a

message about Meacham Park as "poor" and Kirkwood as prosperous establishes a neediness

aligned to Kirkwood's' beliefs about prosperity - which continues to be in direct contrast with

Meacham Park past and current residents. As evident by their statements, "We didn't know we

were poor, we were happy." and "I realize that it was low income it was predominately poor

single moms. But before then, there was a community there, were you know, full families [that]

grew up in Meacham Park." But even more damaging is the title of the article, "Annexation

Giving Meacham a Future: Many in Kirkwood Expect 'The Park' to Prosper," provides its reader

with the notion that the annexation would greatly benefit the Meacham Park community.

But, contrary to that belief, this examination provided evidence that Kirkwood reaped the

substantial financial gains through tax revenue generated from the development of Kirkwood

Commons. But the title alone insinuates that Meacham Park's "future" lays in the hands of

Kirkwood's city planning and development director. The Post-Dispatch reporters also wrote from

the prospective of the Meacham Park community. Wherein a 1999 article written by Kee,

acknowledges the fear of many Park residents in an article entitled, "The Disappearance of

Meacham Park." This article speaks to the worry of Meacham Park residents that fear the

Kirkwood Commons development, as Kee reports, "will be the death of Meacham Park." This

fear is supported by quotes from the Roseland Williams which "called the redevelopment plan

radical surgery for what was ailing Meacham Park." Radical surgery that demolished 130 owner

occupied homes, uprooted 200 residents, ceased income generated by rental properties,

disenfranchised congregations of two churches and forced closure of a barbershop. While the

matter of political process, prepared the community for this radical surgery by annexing 55 acres

of the 135 acres that defined Meacham Park following the annexations of 1957 and 1968. The

Post-Dispatch articles reported that the residents of the Meacham Park community wanted the

annexation and how it would be beneficial to the community. These benefits were spoken

through the voices residents who believed Kirkwood's rhetoric of hope and promise for Meacham

Park that would result from the annexation.

These articles supported the narrative touted by Kirkwood officials of how the annexation

would be beneficial to the Meacham Park community and its residents. When collaborating

behind the scenes to ensure the annexation came to fruition, positive media coverage was

essential to enacting policies. Getting Meacham Park residents to publicly endorse the

annexation, as written in the Post, "Joe Cole, a resident for 68 years and community activist,

looks forward to new homes" (Gross 1994). However, later in the same article he implies that the

new houses being built in Meacham Park as a contingency of the annexation would be occupied

by white residents, which would still be beneficial to the community. The article also perpetuated

the narrative of the economic decline of the neighborhood by quoting the 1990 census data that

showed Meacham Park to be among the poorest in the metropolitan area (Gross 1994). But

others reported on the plight of Meacham Park residents when writing in a January 2000.